BELLGROVE CASTLE.

A ROMANCE.

LANE, MINERVA-PRESS, LEADENHALL-STREET.

BELLGROVE CASTLE;

OR,

THE HORRID SPECTRE!

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY T. H. WHITE.

VOL. I.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE

LADIES

OF GREAT BRITAIN.

THE author feels the most exalted pride, in anticipating your favour, on the following pages:

Deign then, ye fair arbitrators of taste and refinement, to sanction them with your illustrious patronage.

It is *your* element—it is *your* province—it is *your* privilege—to decide on lucubrations like these.

Permit

Permit him, then, to confide in that benign and amiable indulgence, to which the sex are ever prompt; and be assured, that the same moment you divinely condescend to countenance his efforts, you confer on him an inestimable favour, such as he will ever cherish as the *Idol* of his soul, while it constitutes the supremest gratification of his wishes.

T. H. W.

Duke's Court,
St. Martin's Lane.

BELLGROVE CASTLE;

OR,

THE HORRID SPECTRE!!

CHAPTER I.

IT was in the decline of a summer's day, as a gentleman of the name of Bellgrove was making his way over a desert heath, wild and forlorn in its appearance, just at the entrance of a dreary lane, his horse took fright at a sudden glare of light which darted across the road.

It was with difficulty the rider could keep his seat, while the animal kept

kicking, plunging and rearing, as if struck with some sudden impulse of terror, and immediately galloped off with the greatest rapidity.

Our traveller, though endued with a more than common presence of mind, felt alarm at his hazardous situation, which threatened every moment his destruction; when, fortunately, in turning a corner, his horse was checked by a gate, which opposed his passage.

Orlando, after recovering himself, took refuge under a tree, as heavy drops of rain began to fall, and the sky wore the appearance of an approaching storm.

Scarce had he taken shelter, when a tremendous clap of thunder broke over him, which seemed to shake the earth, and was succeeded by a dreadful flash of lightning, which momentarily affected

fected his sight, and shivered a tree not far from him.

The storm now arose to a most awful height, and seemed to threaten universal desolation.

The ungovernable wind shook every tree as though it would instantaneously tear it up by the roots, produced a dreadful rustling among the branches, and howled in tones melancholy and horrid.

The rain came down with a fury as though it would level all around; and the vivid glare which took place at intervals, served only to make each object assume some dreadful and unmeaning shape.

Our traveller, in the midst of this convulsion of nature, thought it prudent to dismount, as his horse was be-

come ungovernably restive; and, having tied him to a branch of a tree, stood meditating on his melancholy situation.

His reflections, in such a state, were, of course, gloomy, and his apprehensions heightened, under the supposition that these occurrences foreboded some unlucky event; the delay, likewise, which it occasioned, added in no small degree to his anxiety, as he had set out upon business of the most pressing and most important nature.

The storm shortly after subsided, but left him in such profound darkness, that he despaired of recovering the road again.

In this forlorn situation he determined to trust himself to the sagacity of the animal he rode, who, after making several pauses and stumbling in different places, at last brought him to a spot which

which he conjectured to be an open road.

Our hero was now involved in a case of no small perplexity; the darkness of the night had carried him quite out of the track it was his intention to pursue; and, after riding in various directions, he was totally at a loss how to proceed.

Nothing could be more distressing to our traveller, to whom every moment's delay seemed to bring sentiments of horror and despair; he grew quite disconsolate at this adventure, and suffered his horse to take any road to which he was inclined: a favourable incident, however, soon happened to cheer his mind---the sky began to clear, and the moon, bursting through a cloud, made all around him visible.

Our hero looked about with the hopes of discovering the road he had wandered from;

from; but all was strange, and the only consolation left him was the sound of a distant bell, which, at solemn intervals, proclaimed the hour of twelve.

In an impulse of despair, he directed his way to the place from whence the sound proceeded, and continued to travel in several winding directions, but without success; at length he arrived at a lonely-looking habitation, surrounded by a thick and massy wall.

The appearance of the building was by no means a cordial to his almost exhausted spirits. It was nearly dropping into ruins, and the wall surrounding it had wide gaps in several places, and, by its leaning posture, threatened to involve the passenger in a heap of ruins.

Our hero began to doubt whether this mouldering fabric contained any human being, or not; yet, from a sudden

den appearance of light which darted across one of the windows, he concluded it to be inhabited; under this persuasion, he applied himself to the knocker of the gate, but no one answered; he repeated the blow, but all was still.

Orlando was on the point of retiring, when a second flash of light, in a more distant part of the building, made him resolve to persist. He now dismounted, and giving the door a sudden shock, the rusty and time-worn hinges gave way, and he found himself in a court-yard, the stones of which were overgrown with weeds and moss.

Having secured his horse by shutting the door, he advanced towards the porch that led into the building, which he conjectured to be the remains of a venerable abbey; and applying himself to the latch, the door opened, and he entered a spacious hall, the antique windows of which

which admitted just light enough for him to survey the solitary relics it contained.

In some parts lay fragments of ancient armour; a rusty lance, or two, leaned in one corner of the room, and here and there hung a mouldy and worm-eaten picture. By the chimney stood a large decayed arm-chair, which, for its height and figure, seemed to have been in the service of many generations.

Our hero seeing no better opportunity of acquiring rest, from the fatigue he felt, than this venerable article afforded, threw himself into it and tried to forget the dreariness of his situation by a favourable slumber.

Scarcely had he attempted this, when a piercing shriek, like the sound of a female voice, roused him from the reverie he had fallen into. He started up

and

and flew to the door. Here he continued to listen, but all was now still and silent as the grave.

He knew not what to make of these strange occurrences; at one time he thought the abbey to be inhabited by banditti, at another, that the whole was merely the illusion of fancy.

In this undetermined state he betook himself a second time to his seat, when a sudden fluttering against the windows, succeeded by horrid screams, produced another interruption to his design. Orlando, however, soon suggested the cause of this event, and concluded that the place had long been the resort of screech-owls and bats.

He soon discovered that this abode bade defiance to repose; every now and then, a sudden blast shook the building, made the doors rattle like thunder, beat

against the casement, and whistled in a shrill and piercing tone through the numberless chinks, time had produced in it.

Our traveller's ideas at length became confused by a repetition of lonely occurrences, and he sunk into an agitated sleep, which produced the following dream:

On a sudden he beheld a female form rise out of the earth; she was habited in deep mourning, her cheeks were pale and wan, and her countenance, which had been beautiful, denoted sorrow and despair; she pressed a lovely infant to her breast, and with wistful eyes seemed to implore from him pity and assistance.

At this instant he beheld an uplifted dagger; the hand that held it was visible, but the form was enveloped in a thick gloomy vapour. A voice now exclaimed,

claimed, "Murder is the delight of my savage spirit! I cannot suffer innocence to live! Thus, then, I add another sacrifice to my revenge!" Immediately the dagger pierced the breast of the unfortunate victim. It was reared again to assassinate the child, when a form, expressive of majesty and goodness interposed, and thus accosted the horrid spectre:

"Hold and forbear thy murderous purpose; too long has thy sanguinary soul triumphed; BUT THE HOUR OF RETRIBUTION IS AT HAND! thy power is exhausted, and soon shall find an everlasting check!

"Retire to thy infernal abode, where thy accumulated crimes shall procure thee accumulated horrors. Thus, then, I sentence thee to torments unutterable."

At this moment the earth quaked, a horrid gulph appeared, from which issued a sulphureous smoke and flame, in which the bloody spectre descended, and was heard no more.

The awfulness of this vision operated so powerfully on our traveller, that he awoke; but not without considerable sensations of inquietude and anxiety. He started from the chair, and exclaimed, "Ye heavenly powers protect the innocent, and shield them from a villain's purpose!"

This ejaculation proceeded from an apprehension our hero entertained, that the dream was ominous to the pursuit he was engaged in.

The perturbation which this idea threw Orlando into, was inexpressibly painful for the moment; but recovering from his

his drowsiness, he thought it a weakness to lay too great a stress on the idle phantasms of a dream; still, however, he could not help at times giving way to the opinion, that there was a sort of enchantment in this affair, which denoted some foul deeds peculiar to the place.

This opinion our traveller was determined at some future period to investigate; at present, his mind was intent upon a concern of the most tender and interesting nature, and which, since the dream, had made him additionally urgent to prosecute his journey with all possible speed and dispatch.

Our hero quitted the place with disgust, and mounting his horse, which had grazed in the court-yard, rode off in search of the nearest village, for the purpose of being directed in his way to Horrordale Castle.

After

After riding a considerable time he alighted at an habitation, which, though dignified by the title of inn, had nothing superior in point of appearance to a common public-house. Orlando was attended by a person who ushered him into a neat apartment, and by a ceremonious disposition to please, attracted his notice, notwithstanding his mind was then occupied by some very serious reflections.

When the waiter had attended our traveller with the most exact and most scrupulous conformity to his wishes, he retired, with an eager desire, to confer with his companions on the stranger's arrival.

" Jerry," cries one, who was sitting in the kitchen, " what sort of company have you just let into the house; he seems to me as if he had rode hard and endured a good deal of fatigue, by the queerness

queerness of his looks. By the bye, this visit is a little extraordinary, as seldom any traveller passes by us now-a-days; I should like to get a peep at the newspapers---forty pounds, you know." ---Here the enquirer gave a very significant look at his companions, and concluded with saying---"I mean no reflections, gentlemen."

Jerry shook his head and exclaimed, "Come, come, Master Larkins, don't be too hard upon a weary traveller; I think his honour has rather too honest a countenance to be what you hint at; yet, there is something strange and misterious in his appearance."

"He put some odd questions to me," continued Jerry, "which may have more meaning in them than poor Jerry can comprehend."

"Is your's a quiet house, waiter," cries

cries his honour? "O yes, sir," replied I, "I am never disturbed by any thing, but the braying of an ass, or the barking of our great dog; but these we don't call tenants of the house; besides, I have now got so used to them, that they disturb me no more than the cricket in our chimney-corner."

"Have you many people in the village?"---"Very few, your honour. Ours, it is true, was once a populous place; but, somehow, one and another dropping off, and some quitting the spot, we have hardly any left---none, I'll swear, of any note, except my master and myself."

"You may send me up some refreshment," says his worship, "and at a future period I may become better acquainted with you."

"Let me see; I don't altogether like

that

that sudden craving of intimacy with me; to book, Jerry---to book; have you committed murder?"---"No."---"Have you robbed any one?"---"No."---"Have you defrauded any?"---"No."---"Have you spoke treason?"---"No."

This singular character now concluded his soliloquy, by exclaiming, "Exceedingly well, Mr. Jerry; I am very glad you can give so good an account of yourself:" and a hearty laugh ensued at this instance of Jerry's peculiar turn of whim and humour.

Jerry was a great favourite in the village, and, on account of his good-nature and cheerfulness, was distinguished by the title of Happy Jerry.

There was something in the physiognomy of this man, a sort of compound of humour and gravity, that created a smile at first sight.

He

He was harmless in his conduct, and abounded in many quaint, out-of-the-way sort of sayings, which, though spoken sarcastically sometimes, were sure not to give offence.

Jerry had for some time acted as ostler, though his abilities deserved a better situation. He was a tolerable mechanic; could bleed well; understood something of drugs; and, for his skill this way, was both surgeon and doctor of the village. He was master of many tricks in legerdemain; was a professed astrologer; and often amused his neighbours with a description of their future fortunes. In short, he understood things so well, as to render himself a very useful hand in the village.

Jerry was peculiarly happy in his temper; a philosopher on all occasions, though his philosophy was but of short duration in cases of danger; he

was happy in prosperity, and easy in adversity.

The leading feature of his mind, however, was superstition; he had a strong reliance in the doctrine of ghosts, and often harrassed his fancy with a belief of their existence.

He had his lucky and unlucky days; could determine what were good and bad omens; but all his ingenuity in this way served to make him, at times, timorous and unhappy, and frequently was the occasion of many uneasy sensations to his neighbours.

Jerry's numerous avocations in the family occupied nearly the whole of his time, so that he was frequently disturbed in the midst of a story: this happened to be the case during his conversation in the kitchen.

Just

Just at the finish of his soliloquy, Larkins was preparing a jocular tale, when the bell rang, and Jerry was summoned to attend the customers in another quarter.

When he returned, he found his associates engaged in a conversation about the possibility of a person's appearance to his friends after death.

What gave rise to this discourse was, a circumstance that had occasioned much consternation in the neighbourhood.

It had been asserted by Farmer Collet and others, that they scarce ever returned home in the dusk of the evening, without being molested by a pale and ghastly figure, which every now-and-then intercepted their passage, and never failed to accompany them till they arrived at the ruinous abbey at some distance off, where it instantly left them and disappeared.

Jerry was a staunch advocate for the existence of spirits. He was remarkably eloquent whenever this subject was produced, and was preparing a very learned harangue in their behalf, when the arrival of a person of noble appearance totally interrupted his design.

Jerry flew to assist the stranger in dismounting, who, leaving the horse in his custody, told him he should return again in the space of an hour.

In the mean time Orlando sustained a weight of uneasiness as he sat down to breakfast, partly from a reflection of his past experience, and partly from some very alarming apprehensions, which every now-and-then arose in his mind.

He had commenced his journey with a view of accomplishing an event which would have been the proudest and dearest incident of his life.

He,

He, however, found himself baffled in his wishes. The time had fled which alone gave him hopes of succeeding in his design, and his agony was inexpressible when he reflected, that the fatal deed might have transpired which he would have given worlds to have prevented.

CHAP.

CHAPTER II.

NOTWITHSTANDING the despair which took possession of our hero's mind, he felt impatient to proceed on his journey from a sentiment, which, in spite of his despondency, still lingered in his mind, that fortune might yet be propitious to his undertakings.

Orlando was impatient to be gone; and, ringing the bell to settle the expences he had incurred, was immediately attended by Jerry, who, in a formal manner, and with great courtesy, begged to have the honour of knowing his worship's commands.

Jerry

Jerry was very precise in a ceremonious respect to strangers; for, as few of this description arrived at the house, he thought those that did, might be people of great consequence, and entitled to the fullest exertions of his abilities; still there was an air of frankness and honesty in the whole which our hero knew well how to distinguish from a vile cant of flattery, the certain evidence of hypocrisy and dissimulation.

Orlando cast an attentive look at Jerry, as he stood soliciting his commands, and seeing an honesty in his countenance which he liked, entertained a thought of taking him into his service.

"Have you been long in your present employ, Jerry?" cries Orlando.

"Not long enough to get rich, your honour."---"Is that your object, then, Jerry?"

Jerry?"—"No, your honour; it's a folly to look for what one shall never obtain."—"But how do you know you can never be rich?"—"For two reasons, your honour; I want both wit and economy."—"But you are content?"—"Why, as to that, your honour, my maxim is, the present state is the best, till we can find a better. This maxim I have sustained through life, and it has wonderfully assisted me in the rubs I have met with, which, God knows, have neither been moderate nor few."

"Suppose," cries Orlando, "a better situation was offered you, would you not embrace it?"

"Why, in that case, your honour, I should obey the proverb, 'Choose for the best;' but I leave all things to Providence."

"The case is this," continued our

 hero;

hero; "I want a person to superintend my travelling concerns; I want a companion who possesses courage, honesty, and industry."

" Depend upon it I am the man, the very man, your honour!

" As to the first qualification, your honour is not going to the wars, or to encounter highwaymen or wild beasts, I suppose?

" As to the rest, no one knows better the proper duties of a servant to his master, nor is more willing to execute them.

" Your honour will say, I am very confident---but those are the expressions which a former master was pleased to bestow upon me; and I thought they sounded so agreeably, that I have retained them in my memory ever since."

" But

"But Jerry," cries Orlando, "I am a man of honour, and don't wish to seduce any one from his employment; therefore---"

"I understand you, sir," replies Jerry; "but I am one of those comical fellows that never make any permanent engagements.

"As I love to make others happy, my employers have always allowed me to be free and easy; therefore, if you please, I will commence your servant directly."

"You cannot so abruptly, Jerry."

"Immediately, if your honour pleases, as there is a lad, now in the house, who can succeed me this very day."

"Well, Jerry, if you are sure no inconvenience will arise—."

"No other than three vacancies, your honour."

"Three vacancies!" cries Orlando; "do you call those no inconveniences?"

"None at all," replies Jerry; "for I have a long time served in all three capacities."

"I'll tell your honour a droll story on the subject."—"Be quick then," cries our hero, "for I must be gone."

"One day a gentleman stopping at our house, called for the waiter, I appeared; soon after he vociferated ostler! here sir, says I, presenting myself before him: he swore that it was not me that he wanted.

"I insisted upon it that it was. Begone with your impertinence, cries he; I res-

I respectfully bowed, your honour, and went away; soon after I heard the cry of here, post-boy!

"Immediately I skipped like harlequin, and mounting a pair of horses which stood ready saddled in the yard, whisked up to him with the chaise in a twinkling."

"What the devil makes you so officious to day," says the gentleman.

"Oh! believe me, your honour," cries I, with a smack of my whip, "I am in my right office; whether waiter, ostler, or post-boy, I serve in all three capacities."

"Well, here is a couple of shillings for your humour," cries the gentleman, "but besure, with your alacrity, you don't break my neck."

 This

This gentleman frequently stops at the house, and says we have the civilest servants he ever met with; for whether waiter, ostler, or post-boy, he knows not which to commend most for civility and attention.

Our hero could not help smiling at the conclusion of this story. Jerry was immediately engaged, and instantly received orders to arrange his affairs, and prepare to depart.

Before we describe the departure of Orlando and his noble 'Squire, it may be necessary to describe the origin and adventures of our traveller, as well as the very serious and important objects he had in view in his present journey.

CHAP.

CHAPTER III.

ORLANDO BELLGROVE was a man of very singular cast of life. He had experienced many vicissitudes, and, though young, had suffered a number of misfortunes, not to be equalled, perhaps, by many of graver years.

He was the only son of a worthy baron, who resided in a castle of a noble structure, in the north of England.

This castle had been a place of great strength in former days, and, by its formidable bulwarks, had repelled many a furious invader. It had, however, for

a century past, received a different aspect. The drawbridge was removed, and the mote, which surrounded it, filled up.

The battlements had fallen to decay, and a new design, more pleasing to the owner, erected in their stead. Still, however, it retained something of its ancient grandeur, and reminded the spectator of the amazing power which human efforts are capable of producing.

This stupendous structure stood upon an eminence, at the front of which, on a gentle slope, appeared a spacious lawn; a grove of trees on either side the building, gave a grandeur to the view.

At the extent of the lawn was a declivity, at the bottom of which a noble river ran in several meandering directions, along which the floating bark was seen

seen to glide, and oft the fisher took his stand.

At about the distance of two miles appeared a straggling village, the houses of which, encompassed by a bower of trees here and there, shewed their humble roofs.

The distant prospect exhibited a richness of scenery scarcely to be equalled.

Numberless were the objects delightful to the view.

The sight was gratified, according to the description of the poet:

"The bursting prospect spreads immense around,
"And snatch'd o'er hill and dale, and wood and lawn,
"And verdant field, and darkening heath between,
"And villages embosom'd soft in trees,
"And spiry towns by surging columns mark'd
"Of household smoke, your eye excursive roams!"

THOMSON.

Such

Such were the charming advantages of Bellgrove Castle, a spot highly congenial with the disposition of the baron, who had long retired from the bustling gaieties of the town, and felt all the delight that man could wish in the rural scenery about him and the happiness of his family.

The baron was turned of five-and-forty; his lady a few years younger. He was a man possessing a good understanding and an excellent heart, condescending in his deportment, and of great humanity to his fellow-creatures.

He was one on whom the rich gazed with admiration, and on whom the poor daily intreated Providence to shower down blessings for his bounty.

His lady was the very counter-part of his virtues.

She

She was amiable and discreet, easy of access, and one who studied to alleviate the calamities of life wherever she found them.

The baroness was assiduous in the welfare of her numerous tenantry and the poor around, and never denied her assistance in cases of emergency.

Such were the excellent qualities of this happy pair, who, in the course of several years, had beheld a numerous family.

The baroness had brought her lord eleven children, out of which there was only Orlando remaining, on whom they bestowed all that fondness and attention which such a loss could possibly excite.

The baron had taken under his protection a youth, whom he was called

 upon,

upon, by family sympathy, to adopt as his own.

This youth, whom we shall distinguish by the name of Osmond, was the son of the baroness's sister, whose husband, having squandered away the whole of his property, put a period to his existence, and left his wife, who survived him but a few months, without a shilling, to the mercy of the world.

The baroness was much afflicted at her sister's unhappy fate, and the baron instantly adopted the little orphan as his own.

Orlando was now about fourteen years of age; his cousin only wanted a few months of the same. There was a material difference in the temper and disposition of these two youths.

Orlando

Orlando was open and generous in his behaviour, of affable and condescending manners, never insulting to his inferiors, and studious at all times to promote the happiness of his companions, and never disposed to disturb the tranquillity of any one by meanness and artifice.

Osmond could assume all these engaging qualities, but they were foreign to the native propensity of his heart.

In consequence of this stratagem, he was thought to be equally amiable with his cousin, and was accordingly viewed with the same degree of esteem. Osmond gloried in the success of his ingenuity, and was resolved to use every art, not merely to rival, but even to supplant Orlando, in the good opinion of the world.

The baron and baroness were happy in

in their promising family; nor did they ever shew any partiality for either one in particular. Osmond never knew any punishment which Orlando was exempted from, under similar circumstances.

As an orphan, he excited all that pity and tenderness in the minds of his foster parents, which the benevolent are ever prone to exercise.

It was at the same time no small pleasure to the baron, to discover in his nephew those talents, which in due time might render him a conspicuous member of society.

Often would the happy pair behold their growing treasure with delight, and frequently would they form to themselves the most flattering expectations of the eminent stations which their rising virtues might one day advance them to.

Osmond,

Osmond, though nothing could warrant him in such behaviour, would often treat his cousin in an imperious and assuming manner.

He was, indeed, naturally of a haughty and an arbitrary disposition, and of such consummate pride, that he would never acknowledge a fault, nor ever make any concession for it; on the contrary, if a school-fellow at any time remonstrated with him on any impropriety he had been guilty of, Osmond would instantly mark him down as the object of his insidious revenge.

Orlando put up with his cousin's misconduct with great lenity and forbearance. Though no coward, he would often wink at those insults, which he would have resented in another.

This he was prompted to do from the natural goodness of his heart, which would

would not suffer him, even at this juvenile period of life, to bear too hard on the foibles of the fatherless.

Thus, this amiable youth, at an early period, evinced a nobleness of soul, which, instead of procuring that esteem from the perverse Osmond, only instigated him to fresh deeds of malice and ill-nature. An instance of which we shall here relate:

At the school where these young gentlemen were placed, there happened a circumstance which created much disturbance and consternation.

One of the scholars had lost a new shilling out of his box, which he particularly valued, it being a keep-sake from a friend.

He made every enquiry among his school-fellows, but they all denied having seen it. Amongst

Amongst those who were most strenuous in asserting their innocence was Osmond, who inveighed with the greatest severity against the person who could be guilty of such a misdemeanour, and at length proposed a general search: this was accordingly agreed to; and, upon a minute examination, the money was found in the trunk of Orlando.

Nothing could have given a greater shock to the mind of this youth, than such a degrading evidence against him. He revolted with indignation at the thought; but all his endeavours to vindicate himself were fruitless. He was sentenced to be flogged, and to wear the badge which is affixed to delinquents in cases of dishonesty.

The ingenuous youth, conscious of innocence, stood lamenting his ungenerous fate, when a school-fellow, to whom he was much attached, intreated

Orlando

Orlando to permit him to take the disgrace, by a confession of the crime.

Orlando was struck with admiration at this instance of generosity; but scorned to transfer the censure upon one equally as innocent as himself.

This affair cemented still stronger the friendship between them, and produced an attachment which continued with them to the latest period of their lives.

While affairs stood in this menacing and disadvantageous way towards Orlando, on a sudden a general cry of 'Produce your keys,' sounded through the room, and an universal examination took place accordingly.

After a very nice investigation, it was discovered that nobody was in possession of a key that would open the box, but Osmond.

As

As a corroboration of his guilt, there was at the same time found in his possession, two or three articles, which were instantly claimed by the loser of the shilling.

Osmond was now convicted on the clearest evidence, and stood the picture of shame and remorse.

His comrades were exasperated at his insidious behaviour, a continual recollection of which, made him the object of their contempt ever after.

When the time arrived for the delinquent to receive his punishment, Orlando earnestly intreated in behalf of his cousin. Such an interposition was highly commended by the master; but nothing could induce him to remit the chastisement due to such offence.

Not a few were the kind offices Orlando

lando shewed to Osmond; his affection for him was, indeed, the same as if born of the same parents. Once he jumped into deep water to preserve him, an attempt that would have been fatal, but for the interference of a stout, able swimmer, who saved them both.

Such repeated acts of kindness, we should suppose, would have softened the rancour of Osmond's disposition; but there was evidently something in his nature, repugnant to the soft bands of friendship; and he every now-and-then exhibited such marks of hostility, as clearly shewed the malignity of his heart.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IV.

THE time now arrived, when our youths were to retire from the usual formularies of a school, to pursue a more mature plan of education; a circumstance, which led the baron and baroness to turn their attention a little to their future progress in life; that such, indeed, might be a happy one, was the nearest concern of their hearts.

It was, in reality, their principal wish to pursue such measures as might eventually not only contribute to, but as far as human foresight can conjecture, ensure their honour and happiness.

The day on which Orlando and Osmond were to return from school, for the last time, the baron was determined should be a joyous one; for this purpose, he invited the neighbouring tenantry, and the poor around, for a considerable distance.

The baron had made every necessary preparation on the lawn to receive them, and was resolved to entertain them in the most hospitable manner.

The baron, as I before observed, was of a truly benevolent disposition, and felt not a little pleasure in seeing his tenants and neighbours happy: many were the donations he conferred in private. The poor found a valuable friend in him, and looked up to him with confidence, both as a magistrate and benefactor.

All was mirth and gaiety this day, at the

the castle; good humour was seen in every countenance, and plenty abounded throughout the whole; the baron and his lady at the same time taking a survey, with an air of infinite satisfaction and happiness.

Long had the baron enjoyed the esteem of the neighbourhood in which he lived. In the early part of his life, he had conducted himself in such an affable and engaging manner, that when he departed on his travels, it spread a gloom around; and, when he returned, he was welcomed with an enthusiasm that strongly denoted the amiable light he was held in; and ever since that period, the castle has been celebrated as being the asylum of the poor and wretched.

The baron, upon mature reflection, at length determined upon a line of conduct for his children.

The

The University, though he was well aware of the depravity abounding there, and by which many youths have been contaminated throughout the remainder of their lives, nevertheless appeared to him the most eligible mode of finishing their education.

A tutor was soon after provided for them, and the young gentlemen, in a few weeks, took their departure for Cambridge.

The Rev. Mr. Flint was a gentleman of a very specious deportment.

He possessed no small share of penetration and art, by which he could dive into the various dispositions of the world, and take his measures accordingly.

He was descended from needy parents, who, to serve their own purposes, and

and gratify the inclinations of a certain peer, consented to the prostitution of their only daughter.

This sordid compliance gained them a pension for their two surviving sons; the eldest of which, the person of whom we are now speaking, he took under his immediate protection, and for the other, he provided a situation in a great family somewhere in the west of England.

Young Flint soon understood the most prevalent propensity of his protector, and studied every means to gratify it.

He was, besides, master of the most consummate flattery; could fawn and cringe as occasion required; and, in short, could assume any shape that he thought would procure him a continuance of the favor and countenance of the peer.

In due time his lordship contrived to get him into orders, when, thinking he had done enough for the services he had received, dismissed him, to practise on the credulity of the world.

Flint, by some means or other, found out that there was a tutor wanted at Bellgrove Castle.

Instantly he repaired to the baron, and, in the most artful and specious terms, solicited the office.

The baron was charmed with the good sense and agreeable manners of the person who made the application, and intimated, that nothing more was necessary than the usual ceremony on such occasions.

Flint referred him to the earl, to whom the baron immediately wrote,

and

and received the most flattering testimonies in his behalf.

The reverend gentleman was accord- appointed to the office, and left astle, with the young gentlemen, thout solemnly promising the baron to use the utmost fidelity and care.

The first step that Flint took on his arrival at Cambridge, was to examine the respective dispositions of his pupils.

In Orlando he beheld those virtues, which shone as a conspicuous reproof of his own bad qualities. With honour and virtue he could do nothing, except study to corrupt it.

But the disposition of Osmond delighted him to a very great degree. In him he saw a variety of *ingenious* talents, which he thought, in the event, he could

could shape considerably to his own advantage.

Soon as he made the discovery, [illegible] decided on the partiality whi[illegible] he [illegible]tended, in future, to shew him.

[Our readers, perhaps, suppose the youths made little progress in their studies under such a teacher, but the contrary was, indeed, the case.]

On their arrival at the castle, when the first vacation commenced, the baron was delighted with the improvement he saw in Orlando and Osmond.

The tutor was more and more caressed, and returned with a still gr[illegible]er share of the baron's confidence and good opinion.

Flint soon discovered on what the baron's expectations were fixed, and,

as

as he knew the surest road to favour, was to advance them in their studies, he used every assiduity to accomplish such a measure.

In this attempt he was remarkably successful; for, at the expiration of a little better than two years, the youths had made very rapid and considerable acquirements.

Our reverend parasite had a double game on his hands at this period.

The one was an eye to preferment from the baron, and the other to train his younger pupil to a certain undertaking he had in view, and from which he expected to derive considerable advantages.

He had tampered with Osmond in many instances, and always found him prompt.

Flint, however, proceeded very cautiously in such attempts, and was unwilling to entrust him with the secret we have just hinted at, till he had ceived the most indubitable evider that Osmond was ripe for any pu however flagrant.

One of the most prominent features in Osmond's character was, ambition. His haughty spirit revolted at the humble and dependent situation he held in the baron's family.

He often cast a glance of envy at his cousin, not only on account of his expectations, but also of his merits, which began to shine, to the admiration of all who knew him; and such was the baseness and ingratitude of Osmond's heart, that he would have sacrificed Orlando to his pride, could he have done it with security.

Osmond,

Osmond, however, was a perfect master of dissimulation. He took care to conceal the perturbation of his soul [illegible] Orlando's presence, and succeeded [illegible] preserving the good opinion of his [illegible]n; at the same time he suggested [illegible] of destroying him.

Flint saw the emotions of ambition and envy which preyed on Osmond's mind, and was no stranger to the cause of them. With the utmost subtlety he had dived into the native propensity of his heart, and found he could adapt it to any purpose.

Orlando, while at college, was, at times, subject to sensations of uneasiness.

The behaviour of Osmond, in many instances, contributed towards them.

The latter was frequently very irre-

gular in his conduct; would sometimes absent himself for days, and even weeks, without assigning any reason for so doing.

He was not unfrequently inebri[illegible] and often, in such cases, used in[illegible] language to his cousin.

Orlando was several times on the point of writing to the baron on such an occasion, but the goodness of his heart checked him in what he thought might produce the ruin of his relation, for whom he entertained a sincere esteem.

In the mean time, the tutor exhibited the deepest concern at the behaviour of Osmond; he even wept on the occasion, and intreated, in the most moving terms, that he would abandon such reprehensible proceedings.

All this was done in Orlando's presence,

sence, who admired such an instance of his preceptor's affection, and was entirely reconciled on finding his advice had produced a wholesome reform in his cousin Osmond, who began now to be more regular in his deportment.

The insidious teacher had, indeed, become alarmed at the lengths Osmond had taken, from the indulgence shewn him; and, however he might wink at, nay, even connive at, such dissipation, it was never his intention that his pupil should make an open shew of it.

Flint, therefore, gave Osmond many cautions in private, to be a little more on his guard, and not to pursue such a line of conduct, as it would materially injure the interests of them both.

Besides, the censure such behaviour was likely to bring on the tutor, it operated in direct hostilities against a project

ject which Flint had long indulged an idea of---this was to blacken Orlando's character, for the purpose that his favourite might engross the sole favour of the baron.

The reverend Mr. Flint, however, knew well the hazard of such an experiment, and was determined to act in the most wary manner in the affair.

With the utmost caution he probed the baron's mind; but the virtuous deportment of Orlando, and the baron's ardent attachment for his son, made him several times start from his design, at the very moment he was going to put it into execution.

An affair now happened, however, which Flint thought he could handle, so as at any rate to pave the way towards accomplishing his purpose.

It

It chanced, that one day Orlando staid from college a longer time than usual.

His tutor, who felt a curiosity to know how he was employing his time, went in pursuit of him, and discovered the youth coming out of a cottage in a very recluse place, surrounded by an embowering wood.

The same instant that Orlando left the cottage, he was followed by a beautiful damsel, who knelt before him and embraced his hands with the greatest fervency.

Flint exulted in the scene, but took care, by concealing himself behind some bushes, that Orlando should not discover he had been privy to it.

The treacherous preceptor took no pains to enquire into the cause of such

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an incident, which, in reality, meant nothing more than the effusions of gratitude from a poor girl, whose family Orlando had saved from perishing for want; but wrote to the baron, immediately, an account of his eldest pupil having formed an indiscreet connexion, such as must eventually terminate in his total ruin.

At the same time Flint intimated, but in the most guarded stile, the increasing virtues and abilities of Osmond.

The baron was greatly perplexed at this intelligence.

He doated on his son, and had formed the highest notions of his good sense and discretion; at length, however, his partiality gave way to the high opinion he had ever entertained of the tutor's veracity, and he thought it not impossible, that Orlando, in the impe-

impetuosity of youth, might have rushed into the act of imprudence which had been hinted to him.

It happened at this very juncture, that the baron was going to set out on a distant journey, and he thought this an excellent opportunity to convey Orlando from his imprudent haunts.

Under the apprehension before mentioned, the baron wrote to his son, requesting his immediate return from Cambridge, as he was going to make some arrangements among his tenants, wherein the presence of the latter would be absolutely necessary.

The baron intimated at the same time, that as their stay at college was limited to only a few months longer, he thought Osmond, if agreeable to him, might continue till the expiration of the time.

Orlando having consulted his cousin, who seemed quite agreeable to the proposal made him, used the utmost dispatch in complying with his father's request.

He arrived, indeed, sooner than the baron expected him---a circumstance which both surprised and pleased his father, after the intelligence he had received.

Orlando was received with the greatest cordiality by his parents, and soon after accompanied the baron on his journey.

A few days after the arrival of Orlando from Cambridge, the reverend Mr. Flint received a visit from his brother, Mr. Judas Flint, the person whom we have mentioned to be in the service of a nobleman in the west of England.

This

This gentleman possessed an equal degree of *pliability* with his brother, and had maintained a confidential post for some years, by acting in conformity to the wishes of the worst of men.

Mr. Judas Flint had arrived at Cambridge to consult his brother, finally, upon an affair, concerning which they had corresponded. He was not a little pleased to find that he could have a conversation with him alone, as Osmond had obtained permission to be absent the whole of the day.

The two brothers entered into a long and serious discourse, during which, Judas was glad to hear that his brother's pupil might be moulded into any purpose, and confided in, respecting the business he was come to settle.

In the course of the day, they concerted a plan of a most diabolical nature,

ture, which they resolved to make Osmond acquainted with on his return.

In the mean time, they entertained themselves with the most infatuating ideas of the good fortune that would result from their machinations.

Osmond returned late in the evening, but so intoxicated, that the brothers determined to postpone their communications till the next morning.

The following day, Judas Flint entered into a long description of the advantages attending the contrivance he had in view. He had been informed, that ambition was Osmond's predominant principle. He took care, therefore, to paint his story in such colours, as promised the most ample gratification of that passion.

The abandoned youth dazzled with the

the advantages held out to him, shewed a ready acquiescence; but, when the conditions of [illegible] them were mentioned, his countenance changed, he turned pale, and paused for a reply.

Alarmed at these appearances, Flint and his brother would gladly have revoked; but they had proceeded too far. Osmond, however, having recovered himself, soon relieved them from their apprehensions.

He cordially assented to all the particulars, and gave them his hand in confirmation of his hearty consent.

The treaty being settled, there was yet one difficulty to be got over; and that was, the absence of Osmond and his tutor from the college, which was essentially necessary on such an occasion.

The politic tutor, however, contrived to

to clear away every obstacle which might lead to a surprise.

He employed a confidential person to receive messages, take in letters, and to try every means to baffle the designs of the curious and inquisitive.

Orlando and his father had been on their circuit nearly two months; they were now on their return, and as the road they took on their journey home was but a few miles from that which led to Cambridge, the baron was disposed to pay Osmond a visit.

During the course of the journey, he had dwelt a great deal upon the information he had received from Flint, and expected to see something in Orlando's behaviour, to confirm it.

Frequently he attempted to draw from him proofs of an existing attachment,

ment, but could gain nothing that appeared in the least to countenance such an opinion.

The baron here found an additional motive to visit the college, as he wished to have matters cleared up, by a conference with the tutor.

They had now nearly arrived within sight of the town, when some impediment happening to the carriage, they resolved to walk on *till* it was adjusted. It chanced that they passed by the identical cottage which had given the baron so much uneasiness.

The young woman, whom we have before mentioned, was just coming out of the door of the cottage at the moment of their passing. Orlando stepped up to her, and enquired about the good people within.

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The young woman courtesied, and appeared to enjoy great satisfaction at the meeting.

The baron, all the while stood, beholding the affair with no small surprise Immediately Flint's information came into his mind; and he concluded, that this was the very affair of which he had received notice.

Under this persuasion, he walked up to Orlando, and enquired the particulars.

"How happy am I, my dear Sir," replied the latter, "in having been the means of saving this once wretched family! but ten weeks back, and you would have beheld a sight that would have melted a heart of adamant!"

The baron now entered the cottage, and beheld a very respectable man and

woman

woman surrounded with a numerous family, the whole of whom appeared to have just recovered from a violent illness.

The honest couple rose to receive their noble visitor, to whom they soon after related the goodness of his son, in rescuing them from a dreadful malady, by providing medical assistance, and furnishing them with money for proper necessaries.

The baron presented them with something handsome, and left the cottage, not perfectly satisfied with either the credulity or perfidy of the tutor.

Our travellers arrived at the college about seven o'clock in the evening, and were much surprised that neither Osmond nor his tutor were to be found. On questioning the servant, they were informed that the young gentleman and his

his preceptor were engaged in a party of pleasure, and would not return till the next day.

The baron, not quite satisfied, from a degree of confusion the servant manifested in his replies, enquired how long they had been gone; at this, the servant appeared quite confounded. Surprised at this behaviour, the baron was proceeding to put fresh enquiries, when a chaise-and-four drove furiously up to the door; out of which, alighted the gentlemen enquired for. They both appeared fatigued, as if just arrived from a long journey. The baron caught Osmond by the hand, and exclaimed, "Well, my dear boy, you did not expect a visit from us!" Osmond, stammering, replied, "I—I—I—am very glad to see you, Sir; how is my good lady, the baroness?"—"Perfectly well, I thank you," cried the baron,—not a little surprised at the mystery which appeared throughout this affair.

Flint

Flint now addressed the baron, apologizing for the state he saw them in, saying, "that as he considered recreation as highly conducive to improvement, he had taken his pupil, a journey of two or three days, on a visit to a gentleman of his acquaintance, by whom they were received in the most courteous manner."

Though there was something plausible in this account, yet there appeared an unusual particularity in the manner, both of Flint and his pupil, that not a little excited the curiosity of the baron.

The next day, Flint was obliged to summon up all his store of artifice and evasion, to meet the baron on the affair of the cottage.

The artful tutor appeared under very deep concern, that such a misunderstanding should have taken place; but, in

in the most solemn terms, assured the baron, that if he had been too precipitate, it arose from the high regard he had for the honour of the family, and, under such circumstances as the various information he had received, he should have deemed it an inexcusable instance of neglect, to have concealed from him an affair of such an interesting nature to the family.

The baron declined any further conference on the subject, after an explation like this; but, though he seemed to put implicit credit in what Flint had advanced, the latter could perceive the baron was not thoroughly satisfied in the affair.

As a confirmation of his suspicions, the baron intimated it as his wish, that Mr. Flint and his pupil should return with him, to Bellgrove Castle, on the following day.

Flint

Flint was chagrined at this early detection of his duplicity. He thought his stratagem too surely laid. A few months back such an event would have mortified him to the extreme. He now consoled himself with a circumstance which had taken place, a sense of which made him not altogether so uneasy about the baron's favour as formerly.

The next day, the baron and his party left Cambridge for Bellgrove Castle. Great was the joy of the baroness at their arrival; and she welcomed them with every demonstration of cheerfulness and cordiality.

The day after, a rural fete was given to celebrate their arrival, during which the happy partakers exhibited the most enthusiastic testimonies of their affection for the baron and baroness, by their repeated instances of admiration of their son and nephew.

The day was spent in the greatest harmony, and the baron and baroness retired happy in the love and esteem of their numerous, contented and grateful guests.

It was the baron's request, that the young gentlemen should continue their studies a few months more under their tutor at the castle; at the expiration of which, he intended an establishment for them, which would entitle them to act according to their own discretion.

He had also provided a regular plan of conduct for them, which they conformed to with the greatest attention and punctuality.

They spent three hours every morning in study; after this, they were at liberty to take any amusement they might be inclined to.

The

The same attention to their books was expected in the course of the afternoon; but, in this case, they were at liberty to choose their own time.

Mr. Flint did not find himself altogether so happy under such arrangements. They imposed on him a line of conduct quite repugnant to his disposition.

His present situation differed widely from that at Cambridge, where he could manage time as he pleased, without an observant eye on his general conduct and deportment.

His pupil, Osmond, also repined in terms of invective against such a restraint; but, though he thought it most prudent to conform, he consulted his tutor on some means to release themselves from their uncomfortable condition.

A circumstance, however, soon happened in the baron's family, which saved Mr. Flint the trouble of intimating the inconveniences he endured.

CHAPTER V.

THE baron, at this period, received a visit from an old acquaintance, whom he had not seen for some time.

The meeting was cordial on both sides; and Mr. Wilgrove (the name of baron's friend) received an invitation to stay some days, in a manner which he could not refuse.

At the time of this gentleman's arrival, Elint and his pupils were absent on a walk, and on their return were surprised with the sight of a stranger.

Mr. Wilgrove advanced to salute his young friends; but started instantly back upon a view of Flint, who, at the same

same time, turned pale and exhibited the strongest marks of confusion.

The baron was puzzled to account for the singularity of this rencounter; and Mr. Wilgrove, turning upon his heel from the object of his surprise, proceeded to explain his conduct to his friend.

After a few minutes conversation, delivered in a whisper, the baron advanced to confer a little with the tutor, but found he had suddenly quitted the room.

Surprised at this abrupt behaviour, the baron desired Orlando to go in pursuit of Mr. Flint, and request his return to the company.

Orlando flew to the study, supposing he had retired there; but he was mistaken. He then traversed the different apartments, and even the grounds about the

the castle, without meeting with his tutor; after which he enquired of the servants about him, one of whom informed him, he had seen Mr. Flint cross the lawn in haste and was soon out of sight. Orlando at length returned with the intimation, that his tutor was no where to be found.

Mr. Wilgrove was not at all surprised at this piece of information; but the baron, who had but just caught the heads of something he had still but a faint conception of, considered Flint's conduct altogether, in the course of the morning, as very strange and unaccountable.

After dinner, when the rest of the company were absent, Mr. Wilgrove entered into a conversation with the baron respecting Flint, during which, he not only betrayed his servile situation with the peer in its full extent, but also

also informed him of a few particulars, which made the baron start from his chair with surprise and indignation.

Mr. Wilgrove was concerned to see the unpleasant effect which his intelligence had produced on the baron throughout the remainder of the day. He endeavoured to console him, however, by observing how miraculous it was, that the young gentlemen, apparently, had escaped the smallest degree of contamination.

The baron intimated to Mr. Wilgrove the high sense he had always entertained both of the moral principles and literary talents of Flint; to which Mr. Wilgrove replied, "There could be no doubt of his possessing the latter to a very eminent degree, as, in addition to great acuteness of mind, he had been encouraged by the peer in every opportunity that could advance him in his studies."

The

The baron recoiled at having admitted so vile a miscreant into his confidence, and was resolved, should he presume to return, to punish him, if the law would permit, for the imposition.

The next day, the baron had a conference with his son and nephew, both of whom he cautioned, without describing the particulars he had heard, never to enter into society with Flint, who, he assured them, was a character unworthy of all confidence or regard.

As the baron spoke this, he observed the colour of Osmond change, a circumstance which appeared to him rather mysterious; but, supposing it to arise from his concern for the loss of one whose company he had been so long used to, he forbore to enquire into the affair.

The time was now arrived, when the baron

baron entertained an idea of forming an alliance for his son. He was aware of the many snares that might be laid for a youth of his accomplishments and expectations; it became, therefore, his wish, to see him united to a person whose virtues and rank of life might make him happy.

Among the numerous visitors at the castle, there was one whom the baron thought possessed every qualification to produce such an event.

This lady was the only child of Sir William Pearlby, a baronet of very considerable property, and who resided only a few miles off.

Miss Pearlby was a beauty, and was not destitute of many agreeable qualities; but there was a sort of *hauteur* about her which some people described

as a becoming dignity, but which, in reality, was the offspring of pride.

The baron was one of those who considered it as merely innocent, and thought, upon the whole, he had never beheld a more accomplished woman.

Sir William and his daughter had long been constant visitors at the castle, but they, as yet, had seen very little of Orlando, in consequence of his residence at college.

The baron, however, now that his son had taken up his abode at the castle, hoped, that by frequent interviews, the young folks would become enamoured of each other.

A whole twelvemonth, however, elapsed, and the baron could distinguish no partiality on either side, any thing like what he had set his mind on.

He now forbore to make any further hints to Orlando on the subject, as he wished nature to pursue her own course; and, seeing nothing to encourage his hopes, he at length entirely gave up thinking on the subject.

The baron would have considered himself the happiest of men in a view of his family, but for the irregularities of his nephew Osmond, whose conduct, since his emancipation from scholastic restraint, would admit of no controul.

He seldom joined in any of the little parties of pleasure at the castle.

There was a coldness and distance in his behaviour to the family, which shewed an aversion from being on an amicable footing with them.

In fine, the greatest part of his time was spent in some secret haunts---a circum-

cumstance which led his uncle into many uneasy apprehensions about him.

Repeated instances of this sort induced the baron to remonstrate with him.

At first he used the most lenient and tender language, but found it of no effect.

He afterwards assumed a peremptory tone, to all which Osmond made but a sullen and unsatisfactory reply.

The baron, under such proofs of an abandoned disposition, began to despair of a reform, and dated his ruin from the villainous instructions of his tutor, Flint.

The baroness, at the same time, was pained beyond description at Osmond's behaviour.

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The recollection of her sister's misfortunes would often recur to her mind, and the only consolation she had left was the hopes of seeing her nephew grow up an honour to mankind.

Alarmed at his proceedings, she intreated him, in the most earnest manner, to amend his conduct, and particularly hinted to him the gratitude and respect due to the baron, whose indulgencies entitled him to expect a dutiful return.

Osmond began to be alarmed at this serious investigation of his conduct; for, though his proud spirit spurned at contradiction, yet, for certain reasons, he did not wish to come to an open rupture with his uncle.

In such a situation, he called to his aid his inexhaustible store of dissimulation, and listened to the baroness with a

seeming

seeming contrition, that flattered her with hopes of a reform.

Cheered with this persuasion, she left him, and Osmond retired well satisfied with the success of his stratagem and ingenuity.

The castle now presented the most lively picture of domestic happiness, in consequence of Osmond's reform.

Harmony was restored to the family, which gave the baron and baroness inexpressible satisfaction.

One morning, as they were sitting at breakfast, a letter was put into the hands of the baron, on the opening of which his countenance changed, and the baroness eagerly requested to know the cause.

The baron informed her, the letter

gave

gave an account of the death of Lord Horrordale, a distant relation, of whom he had heard nothing for many years; stating, that the steward of his lordship, never hearing any mention of any relatives but at Bellgrove Castle, had written to him to pay a visit to Horrordale and inspect the affairs.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VI.

LORD HORRBORDALE and the baron had some intercourse together, many years back; but it was of the most unpleasant nature to the latter; his lordship having, a long time, contested the baron's claim to the estate he was then about to take possession of, and that, merely, from a frivolous and malignant motive.

All kind of intimacy between them had also ceased, from another consideration. The deceased, it seems, was a man of the most profligate and aban-

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doned principles, was of an ambitious and sanguinary disposition; and, according to report, had been guilty of violence, more than once, to gratify his purposes.

The baron, with the joint consent of his lady, determined on a visit to Horrordale Castle, and invited Orlando and Osmond to accompany him there; but the nephew excused himself, by saying, that he had promised his company to a brother student, at Lichfield, for a few days.

The day after the following one was appointed to begin the journey, and every arrangement was ordered, necessary for the occasion; when an accident happened to the baron, which obliged him, altogether, to decline it.

In coming down stairs, he slipped his footing, and dislocated his shoulder bone.

The

The visit to Horrordale Castle was, in consequence, postponed for a few days; when more unfavourable symptoms coming on, Orlando, by the earnest entreaty of his father, was persuaded to set out, unaccompanied by the baron.

It was with reluctance, however, Orlando consented to leave Bellgrove Castle under such inauspicious circumstances.

Next to the loss of the society of his father, he felt no small concern at leaving him in such a state of uncertainty.

The baron, however, appeared very cheerful about the business, and intimated, that as he wished to be made acquainted with affairs at Horrordale, and the accident not being of a serious tendency, Orlando might set out without the least uneasy apprehension.

At the same time, he was requested by his father to take an old domestic, of the name of Peter, with him; a servant, who had lived in the family many years, and who had supported a character of honesty and integrity during that time.

Peter was a great favourite with the baron, who knew how to set a due value on the good conduct of his servants, and never failed rewarding them accordingly.

Orlando, attended by his faithful man, Peter left Bellgrove Castle in rather a solitary way.

This honest domestic exhibited a visible emotion when departing.

" Surely, my worthy master, I have not been affected so for some time: I shall not be happy till I return and find all well at the castle."

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"I hope it will not be long," replied Orlando, "before the baron recovers; to be sure, at his time of life, such accidents are sometimes of a serious tendency; but it is our duty to hope for the best."

"Aye, master, that is a doctrine which has sustained my feeble spirits in the worst of times.

"When my affectionate wife died, and when I lost an only son in the prime of life, I thought these afflictions would have overcome me.

"Yet no one knows what he can endure till put to the trial.

"A hope that they were in a better state alone sustained me."

"I think," cries Orlando, "the baron exhibits a pattern of submission."

"Yes,

"Yes, your honour," replied Peter; "and, indeed, I should be much surprised if he did not.

"In the first part of my servitude with your honour's father, I had an opportunity of observing how nobly he could bear the severest of trials.

"My worthy master was then affected with a very ailing constitution, and so powerful was the disorder, that he hardly ever knew an hour's ease.

"Many a time I have, with grief, beheld his emaciated frame, from an apprehension of the consequences; yet, during the whole, his honour was calm and serene.

"The baron was, at the same time, enthralled with a law-suit concerning the greater part of his estate, and, at one time, I thought he would have lost

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the day. In the midst of all, however, he exclaimed to me one day, seeing me dejected; 'My enemies try hard to make me wretched, Peter, but I smile at their attempts! We shall at last be victorious!' And so, thank God, it happened; villainy was frustrated, and virtue triumphed in my master's success!"

"Bravo!" cries Orlando; "I like your gratitude, Peter; but now let us meditate a little on our intended journey.

"I suppose you have seen the owner of the estate we are going to enquire into?"

"Never more than once, your honour; and that was a considerable time before you was born.

"Lord Horrordale came to our house

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one day with a view of making up matters; but my master was inflexible in asserting his rights.

"One of his servants was with us a few hours once, who related to us strange things concerning Horrordale Castle."

"Mention the particulars, Peter," cries Orlando, "they may serve to pass the time away."

"Your honour will not find them very amusing, I believe. But to proceed:—He related that there were not more than six servants kept in a place that would employ twenty; that his lordship was of a very reserved and solitary disposition, confining his attention and conversation to a person in the capacity of valet and steward, who, indeed, seemed to engross the whole of his attention."

"Strange!"

"Strange!" exclaimed Orlando.

"And it seems, your honour, as if Lord Horrordale was never happy in his mind, as his servant told us; moreover, that his master had a constant knack of talking to himself, in the midst of which, he would break out into oaths and curses.

"Again, his lordship was of so morose a temper, that he never looked on his servants but with a frown, so that they were continually in dread of meeting the countenance of their master."

"Surely, you exaggerate?"

"Your honour will pardon me saying, that the account is just as I had it; for, though it happened many years back, it has never escaped my memory since, particularly what he told us afterwards."

 "Let

"Let us hear the whole, by all means," cries Orlando.

"Why then, your honour --"

Here Peter stammered, and exhibited a little change of countenance.

"Do proceed," cries his master, "I am all curiosity to know the sequel."

"Your honour will excuse me for hesitating; for when I begin a subject of this sort, I feel a little aguish."

Orlando smiled, and a second time entreated his servant to continue.

"Well then, your honour, he told us, there were strange noises heard in the castle, at times; and that the place was beset with apparitions and ghosts, both within and without."

"Heaven

"Heaven defend us!" cries Orlando, stifling a smile: "How shall we protect ourselves against such awful visitors?"

"Your honour don't mean, then, to reside there," says Peter, with a stare of timidity and surprise.

"Most certainly I do. Why not, Peter?"

"Don't you think it will be very lonely, sir?" was the reply.

"How can it be lonely, when you tell me there is so much company attending it?"

"But a group of ghastly figures, your honour, are not very amusing; and I have positively heard it asserted, that the place is haunted."

 "Absurd

"Absurd terrors, Peter, believe me. It ill becomes a man of your years to give way to them; besides, if you want inclination to accompany me---".

Peter paused for awhile; then, looking earnestly at his master, exclaimed, while the tear fell from his eye---"Can your honour think me capable of such baseness and ingratitude?

"I would rather encounter every difficulty that can be named, than want for a moment due regard for my benefactors."

"Well, well, Peter, have a good heart; I dare say we shall be a match for all the ghosts that may incommode us."

This dialogue was put a stop to now by Orlando's alighting to dinner, whither

ther his faithful servant attended, not altogether reconciled to the terrors of Horrordale Castle.

Our travellers rode briskly in the afternoon, and found, by the close of day, they had proceeded upwards of forty miles from the castle.

The shades of night coming on, our hero was anxious to arrive at some place where he could alight for the evening, and, upon enquiry, found that there were some good inns at a village about five miles off, to which place the travellers directed their way with speed.

After they had proceeded about a a mile, they came to a cross-road, but it was so dark, that not a letter on the sign-post could be seen.

They found themselves, therefore,

under the necessity of proceeding as chance directed them.

At length Orlando descried a light at some distance, which he supposed to be at the village they were in search of. Our travellers accordingly shaped their course, as nearly as they were able, in a direction with it; but, after some smart riding, the light vanished, and, to their great disappointment, they found themselves on the skirts of a common; they concluded, therefore, that what they had beheld was no more than one of those vapours frequently seen on meadows and marshy grounds.

This circumstance threw Orlando and his 'squire into a state of perplexity, particularly as they were confident they had got out of the track they were directed to pursue.

Our hero, however, was determined

to

to take, as far as he could guess, the direct road across the common.

Just as they were proceeding with this intention, a loud call for assistance, at no great distance from them, threw them into a surprise.

Orlando and his servant hastened to the spot, where they found a man attempting to defend himself from two others, who were attacking him in a furious manner.

The assassins, however, fled as soon as our travellers came up.

Our hero and his attendant offered all the assistance in their power to the injured stranger.

"God bless you, my worthy master!" cries the man, "you came just in time to save my life."

"Are you much hurt?" cries Orlando.

"Not a great deal, master; to be sure I have got a few ugly thumps on my back and shoulders."

"You had better direct us to a surgeon," replied Orlando. "I suppose we are at no great distance from some town or village?"

"Town or village!" answers the stranger; "we are not within ten miles of either!"

"That is unfortunate, indeed," cries our hero; "but how can we assist you?"

"Never mind me," replies the man, "I have not above a mile and a half to go; and, thank God, I have yet strength enough to accomplish that distance."

"But

"But you will have the goodness to direct us on our way."

"That I will do, with all my heart," cries the stranger; "but, I am afraid, my instructions will be of no service to you."

"Why so?" enquires Orlando.

"Because it is all a cross-road to Burnley, the first town you come to; and you will find nobody, at this time of night, to give you further directions."

"Then our situation is unlucky, indeed," cries our hero.

"Not at all," observes the stranger; "One good turn deserves another; so if you will go with me to my cot, I will endeavour to make you all the amends

in my power, for your generous assistance."

Orlando thought it best, in their present condition, to comply with the man's invitation; and, after thanking him, began to accompany him to his dwelling.

Just at this period, the moon arose, and, in some measure, dissipated the gloom of night.

Our travellers accompanied their guide through several lanes and avenues, till, at last, they came to one so narrow and over-shadowed with bushes as scarcely to admit the passage of a man and horse.

Our hero now, for the first time, began to entertain suspicions of his host.

The road appeared so recluse and unfre-

frequented, as induced him to suppose it led to a cave of robbers.

Poor old Peter could hardly sustain himself on his horse, from the force of similar ideas; and was several times on the point of whispering his opinion to his master; but, not knowing how far he might be in the power of the objects he dreaded, he thought it most prudent to be silent.

They now came to a small enclosure, when the guide called out, "Have a good heart, my masters; we are nearly arrived; we shall soon have an opportunity of regaling ourselves with a good fire and hearty fare."

"You live very recluse, master," cries Orlando.

"Why, some people would call it a dull place to be sure; but I don't want

for company, and frequently take a journey to the nearest town or village; and, with a continual round of various employments, I have not time to be mopish or sad."

This was a declaration which, in a great measure, removed Orlando's apprehensions, and operated as a cordial to the terrors of the affrighted 'squire, who sat a great deal easier in the saddle, in consequence of having resumed a good opinion of their guide.

They now arrived at the house, which was so concealed by trees, as to render it invisible to all but those on the spot; and the stranger, after calling for assistance and committing the horses to a person that attended, with a profusion of civility ushered our travellers into the habitation.

The stranger led Orlando, accompanied

nied by his man, into a large room, which, from its size and appearance, seemed to have been formerly devoted to religious purposes.

Our hero, every now-and-then, cast his eyes about the apartment, and paid particular attention to the preparations of defence in it.

In one corner stood a few swords of a most formidable size, and over the mantle-piece was a range of fowling-pieces, with a brace of pistols on either side; but what most attracted his attention was a hat, the handsome appearance of which, he thought, did not well correspond with the homely habiliments of his host.

While he was ruminating on these mysterious objects, the stranger suddenly exclaimed, "Your honour seems rather serious all on a sudden; I dare

say

say you are fatigued; or, perhaps, the strangeness of the place makes you dull.

"Come, let us have a little lively chat, and we will cheer ourselves pre sently with a good supper and a cheerful glass after it."

Our hero thanked him for his hospitality, and enquired into his condition, after the blows he had received; to which the man replied with such an air of indifference, as not a little surprised him.

While they were discoursing together, a person entered and enquired, if it would be agreeable to bring in the supper; which was immediately ordered, on the consent of our travellers.

Orlando, observing more plates on the table than were wanted for them alone, jocularly remarked, "You are not

not without company, I see, in this place."

"O no! your honour; I expect every minute my two brothers, who went a long journey to-day; and, I dare say, will not be long before they return."

Just as he finished this sentence, the absent persons came in, and Orlando's host describing to them the good services the gentleman had done him, they immediately advanced to our hero, and saluted him with the most cordial respect.

There was a frankness and generosity in their manner, which made our travellers a little more easy in their situation.

They all sat down now to the feast pre-

prepared, and very shortly began to be on a very social footing together.

Jokes and merriment abounded.

Every now-and-then the brothers complimented our hero, and seemed entertained, in the highest degree, with his company.

Orlando was not aware of finding such conviviality in so retired an abode. He, however, resolved to partake of it, with an equal degree of spirit with the rest, and was just on the point of pouring out a bumper to his hosts, when a sudden shriek assailed his ears, which threw the whole party into confusion.

Orlando ran to unsheath one of the swords, but was prevented by his companions; who, recovering themselves, said, "It was not an unusual thing---nothing more than the note of screech-owls, with

with which they were frequently annoyed."

Our hero was satisfied with this intelligence, and the company resumed their seats. Scarce was the conversation renewed, when a second and third shriek produced a fresh interruption.

Orlando was startled, and the brothers shewed evident symptoms of consternation; at length one of them started up, and, quitting the room, assured the rest, he would bring a true account of the cause of their alarm.

The party waited with anxious expectation to know the meaning of this sudden outcry. At length the brother returned, and intreated our travellers to shake off their uneasiness, as it was one of those sounds they were frequently accustomed to, which they could not, at all

all times, account for, and to which they paid little attention.

"Come, sir," cries he, "don't let trifles affect you;" and, filling his glass, exclaimed, "Here's to all absent friends."

"With the greatest pleasure," replies Orlando, taking a bumper; and, having honoured the toast, begged now to retire, as it was his intention to proceed early on his journey in the morning.

"By all means," observed the host, "and I hope you will like your accommodation."

"No doubt of it," exclaims our hero. "Fatigue will, I dare say, assist our slumbers."

They were conducted now to an upper room, to which they ascended by a ladder; after which the guide left them, and departed.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VII.

ORLANDO had not been long in the room, when he heard a lumbering noise under him, to which, curiosity prompted him to listen; when, to his astonishment, he found they were moving away the ladder.

The worst of apprehensions seized him at this moment, and he instantly began to meditate means of escape, or defence.

The first step he took, was to explore the room, for the purpose of discovering

ing if any one was concealed there, or if he could remark any thing, to confirm him in his suspicions; but found nothing that could lead to any idea of intended violence.

After searching some time, he observed something, which excited his curiosity; and which, he was determined to examine. This was a door, totally concealed, when they first entered; but which was afterwards discovered, by removing the head of the bed.

This he contrived to effect in so still a manner, as to give no alarm.

Orlando found no difficulty in opening the door, as it was merely upon a latch; and entering into the apartment, was struck with dismay, on perceiving several drops of blood on the floor.

This sight made him pause; as to his faithful

faithful attendant, he was ready to expire with terror and apprehension.

Orlando, notwithstanding the surprise this affair had thrown him into, was determined to satisfy his curiosity, to the full extent. He crossed the room to a closet, which stood almost hid in a nook, at the further end; upon opening it, he observed nothing but a few horsemen's coats, tumbled one upon the other; and was going quickly to shut the door, when he thought he discerned something like a shoe, concealed almost to the very toe. This was a spur to his curiosity; and, upon hastily removing the clothes, he was struck with horror, on beholding a pale and bloody corse, with a gash in the throat, from ear to ear.

Our hero now doubted not a moment, respecting the company he had fallen

into,

into, and naturally concluded, that such was the fate intended them.

He, therefore, determined instantaneously, if possible, to make his escape; and was upon the point of trying the window for this purpose, when his attention was caught by the sound of a deep groan, which issued from some place, near where he stood.

He paused, not knowing how to discover the invisible object of affliction; immediately, a second groan assailed his ears.

Orlando traversed the room, in hopes of discovering the spot from whence the sound proceeded; and, at last, observed a place, where the floor appeared to have been newly repaired; and, upon a close inspection, he found a sliding board, which, with little difficulty, he soon removed, and discovered

a gloomy

a gloomy apartment, from which repeated groans ascended.

Orlando and his servant descended by a few steps into this dreary abode; when, by the faint light of a taper, which glimmered in the centre, he beheld a female, cruelly bound, hand and foot, and, seemingly, left there to perish.

The stranger was about giving a loud shriek on their entrance, thinking, the murderers were coming to finish their barbarities; upon which, Orlando made what signs he could for her to be silent, and she was ready to expire with joy, when she understood they were come to her deliverance.

Having with some difficulty released her, he intimated the necessity of immediate flight.

"Let us hasten to the window."

"Forbear!"

"Forbear!" cries the stranger, "such an attempt—there's not a window in this house that is not either barred or nailed down.

"Every precaution is used in this dreadful abode to prevent escape; and their determination is, that those who once come in shall return no more.

"But let us lose not a moment—hark! the murderers' feet approach."

Our hero hearing a noise, and supposing this to be the case, seized an iron bar which lay on the floor, and stood in an attitude of defence.

The noise now ceased, and when they had debated some time on the means of getting away, the lady suddenly exclaimed, "thank Heaven I have just now thought of a mode of escape! my jailor, I am sure, has some other

mode

mode of entering this apartment, beside that of descending by the steps.

"Let us examine the place thoroughly," repeated the lady.

Orlando took the light, and after close examination, observed a narrow door, which he soon pulled open, by a ring which was fastened to it.

Immediately they entered a dark cavern, of considerable size, in which were tubs, various pieces of cordage, and broken anchors; a sight, which led them to believe that their persecutors were smugglers.

This cave had two avenues, and it puzzled our adventurers to determine which to take. They were not long, however, in deliberating; and upon choosing that on the right, they entered a place which petrified them with horror.

horror. Before them stood a ghastly figure, an entire human skeleton, suspended upon a beam, and glaring with its horrid front on the beholders; around them lay strewed, various bones and trunks of human bodies, mouldering to decay.

Terror gave speed to their flight; they started from this scene of horror, and pursued a narrow avenue before them, which brought them into a spacious apartment; at the top of which was a trap-door, with a ladder, by which, they supposed, the robbers descended.

Our fugitives instantaneously mounted this, and pushing open the door, found themselves, once more, in open air.

Their joy was inexpressible at this discovery; but met with a sudden check

on

on their beholding a man, who stood near the cave, armed, and who appeared as a guard to the place.

Orlando caught the lucky moment, as the centinel was looking another way, and stealing softly behind him, knocked him down instantly with the iron bar he had kept in his possession, for their defence.

The blow did the centinel no material injury; it stunned him sufficiently, however, to enable our hero to disarm him.

The strange man soon recovered, and got up. Orlando, mindful of their safety, seized him by the collar, and exclaimed, "inhuman wretch! who has chosen the office of protecting this murderous abode—thou diest.

"In a moment I send thy carcase,

 accursed

accursed to rot and perish, like the awful spectacles below!"

The man implored in the most piteous manner for mercy, saying, "he would make every discovery in his power."

"Direct us then," cries Orlando, clapping a pistol to his breast, "to some immediate mode of escape, or thou diest instantaneously."

Struck with terror and surprise, the fellow informed them, that at a small distance off lay the vessel used by his companions, and which would be the best means of flight; as the roads, in every quarter, were infested with the gang in whose custody they had been.

Orlando had immediate recourse to the opportunity mentioned; and, without delay, proceeded with the lady towards the spot; at the same time intimating

mating to the stranger, that if he discovered the least treachery in his future conduct, he would instantly dispatch him.

He likewise directed Peter to be instantly on his guard in their way to the beech, and to keep the strictest watch over the robber till such times as they could put confidence in him.

Soon as Orlando and his party were on board, the former enquired of his guide which was the safest port to put in at; and received for answer, that the town of Preston lay about seven miles off, and was the most desirable of any one for that purpose.

Orlando desired the man to make immediately for that place.

The boatman now began to shew symptoms of fear, which our hero soon

interpreted, as arising from an apprehension of being brought to justice; upon which, the latter intimated to him, that if he would make an ingenuous confession of all he knew, he would pledge his word not a tittle of it should ever transpire to his disadvantage.

"God bless your honour!" cries the man; "this is the happiest day I have known a long time. I have often hoped I should not be fated to be a villain all my life. Thank God I have not the blood of any one to lay to my charge: my stay with the gang was compulsatory, believe me, your honour."

"How can that be," cries Orlando; "the same means which enabled us to escape would have served your purpose, would it not?"

"It would, could I have found it unoccupied, as we just now have done; but

but there has always been one or two of the hardiest of the gang kept in the boat, continually on the look out; and such would have been the case last night, but I suppose they are gone to strengthen a party who expect a great booty, and some resistance."—"What, are there more than what I saw?" exclaimed our hero. "Yes, your honour; there are not less than forty in the whole, who are dispersed about in different places; some return home on an evening, and others stay under hollow banks and hedges, or any place of concealment."

"How long have you been in their service?"

"Not more than a twelvemonth."

"Your experience has, I fear, been woful, during that period."

 "To

" To a mind like mine, exceedingly so, your honour; for I have witnessed scenes that would make your blood run cold. Our employment has been any thing that came to hand; smuggling was our chief concern, but robbing occasionally; and even murder, rather than be frustrated in the object in view."

" Strange!" exclaimed Orlando: " I thought the man, whom I protected, had been a harmless and inoffensive character."

" That you protected! Where might that happen, your honour?"

" On a common, about two miles off from the house."

" Then you have been, I find, caught in the snare which hast cost many their lives."

" It

"It was a trick, I have found, by woful experience," replies our hero.

"It is one, your honour, that they have long practised with success.

"A light is exhibited on the common, to delude people from the road; when they find a person approach, they pretend a scuffle, and the humane traveller, advancing to assist, is, by artful means, decoyed to their den, from whence, unless some extraordinary good fortune intervenes, he never more departs."

"But how came you into their possession?" continues Orlando.

"Unfortunately, in my passage to Castleton, we were beset with this gang, against whom our vessel made a stout resistance; but we were, at last, overpowered. The boat was plundered, and our hands carried on board the smuggler;

gler; there were only four of us, and we were obliged to enter into their service, or be murdered on the spot. A temporary anxiety for our lives induced us to choose the former, and they immediately put us on the same employment as themselves.

"Out of the complement there was only myself left, when you found me. One died of grief; the second was shortly missing; and the third was dispatched, in attempting to make his escape.

"Thus situated, your honour will find that I had no opportunity of ridding myself of such inhuman company.

"I therefore endeavoured to resign myself to my situation as well as I could, and to steer as clear from rapine and violence as the nature of my employment would admit."

Orlando commended the honesty of his guide, and promised that he would do all that lay in his power to procure him a lawful and suitable employment.

Our hero, during his conversation with the boatman, was not inattentive to his fair companion; who was nearly overpowered with ill usage and fatigue.

He did every thing in his power to cheer her spirits, and talked to her in terms of consolation on their fortunate preservation.

She thanked him in the most grateful and respectful manner, and assured him, that his kind offices, in her behalf, would ever be remembered by her with the most sincere esteem.

There was something in the appearance of this damsel which interested Orlando greatly in her behalf. She had,

moreover, an engaging manner, and captivating address, such as inspired him with a tenderness of thought he had never experienced before.

It hurt him, exceedingly, to view such beauty in distress, and every moment was tedious and distressing to him, till they should arrive, where every possible assistance and respect might be procured for her.

It was six o'clock when they came to Preston, and Orlando immediately conducted the lady to the first inn of note he came to; and, at the same time, gave orders for every attention that might be necessary.

He then left his fair charge, and went in search of medical assistance.

He found Dr. Selby just risen, and explaining the nature of his visit, requested his immediate attendance.

The doctor was one of those men that feel instantaneous concern for the misfortunes of others, and seizing his hat and cane, accompanied his visitor with the utmost dispatch.

He found the lady much fatigued, with a considerable agitation on her nerves; which, Mr. Selby said, a little rest, and a composing draught, would speedily remove.

The doctor, upon retiring, was invited by Orlando to drink a glass of wine with him after dinner, which the former consented to, provided he was not engaged in the duties of his profession.

When the doctor was gone, our traveller made an application to the magistrate of the place, to lay before him a deposition of what he had been witness to; and left it to the officers of justice to bring

bring the ruffians to condign punishment.

On his return he found the lady so much recovered, as to be capable of conversing more freely.

They began, by resuming the subject of their late hardships; and, Orlando, feeling a curiosity to be acquainted with the lady's story, she, with the greatest good-nature, informed him, 'that she was on a visit to her aunt, who resided in Cheshire; and in her way, stopped one night at the house of an elderly lady, for whom she had a great esteem; that in the following evening she left her acquaintance, to walk to a town, about a mile off, through which, a stage passed to her place of destination; her kind friend, insisting at the same time, that her servant should accompany her there.

' This

'This I refused,' continued the lady, 'as my friend was taken suddenly ill, and had only one attendant about her.

'I then began my walk, and, unfortunately, not recollecting the directions given me, took a wrong turning, and very soon found I had totally lost my way; in which situation, I rambled about in the greatest perplexity, till dusk came on.

'Just at this period, a man, with a chaise-cart, overtook me, and observing my distress, offered to convey me to the place I wanted.

'Rejoiced at such an offer, I proceeded with him, in hopes of soon arriving at the spot.

'We travelled through several turnings, and at last came to a lonely common; after passing which, my guide told

told me he must call at a house a little way from the road, as he had things there which he was under an obligation, that very evening, to convey to the town we were going to.

'I confess,' continued Orlando's fair friend, 'I now became apprehensive for my safety, and was about to remonstrate, but recollecting my defenceless state, thought it most prudent to conceal my fears.

'We now arrived at a place too narrow for the cart to pass, and the driver, in the most obsequious manner, requested me to alight, and walk the small distance that led to the house.

'Nothing could exceed the agitation I felt, as we passed along this dismal avenue; yet I durst not complain. I, however, committed myself to providence, in the hopes I should be preserved

served from whatever harm was intended me.

'At length I arrived, and found my fears, in a great measure, realized. The villain seized me, and dragged me into the house, where my pockets were immediately rifled; my purse and watch taken from me; and my ears assailed with the most outrageous language.

'I was then conveyed in a violent manner up stairs into a room near my cell, and told, at the same time, if I made the least noise, or attempted an escape, I should that instant be put to death.

'I had been in their custody three days before you discovered me; during which the ruffians supplied me with necessary food, but in so sullen, and so savage a way, that I every moment dreaded some cruel and inhuman design.

'No

'No tongue can describe the dreadful anxiety I suffered in such a condition; my reflexions, at last, made me desperate; and believing I should never more return to my friends, I gave repeated shrieks, under the despairing hope they would either bring some one to my assistance; or, that the ruffians would, at once, rid me of my pain.'

Here Orlando observed to his fair companion, that at the moment of the shrieks, he thought there was a case of distress near, but that the villains artfully disguised the affair.

The lady then proceeded: 'It was not long before my cries brought up one of the miscreants, who immediately dragged me into the cell beneath, and after binding me in the manner you saw, quitted me, with the most horrid menaces and curses: what followed afterwards I need not relate; suffice it to

say,

say, it is altogether an incident that I shall remember to the latest period of my life.'

The lady, after finishing her narrative, intimated her intention of returning home the next day. This gave our hero an opportunity of enquiring her place of abode; which she modestly informed him was at Ash-Grove Vicarage.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Orlando; "is it possible you can have been so long my neighbour, and I not possess some recollection of your person?"

"That may very probably be the case," replied Miss Pritchards, the name of the lady; "my life has been, altogether, that of a recluse; and, indeed, I have found those charms in retirement, in the study of books, and in the conversation of an amiable parent, as have

have precluded every wish to move in a more conspicuous circle."

Orlando attended to the lady with inexpressible pleasure, and was charmed with the sentiments she uttered.

He begged to have the honour of conducting her back; and was so elated with the good sense and agreeable manners of his companion, that he became seriously occupied by the thoughts of devoting his time wholly to her service.

While our hero was meditating on the charms of Miss Pritchards, that lady was not altogether insensible to his merits and amiable deportment.

She began to view him in a light, different from those youths she had hitherto seen.

His

His manners were insinuating, and his conversation was such, as instantaneously produced in her a congeniality of sentiment; in short, his company appeared to her no small compensation for the ill-fortune she had endured.

After dinner the doctor arrived; between whom and Orlando an interesting conversation ensued, highly entertaining to the latter.

There was much affability about the doctor, and a certain happy vein of pleasantry, which was sure to amuse. He was, indeed, an honour to his profession; and our hero listened to many excellent maxims, which he was determined should influence his conduct in the future course of his life.

Orlando enquired of Mr. Selby if he could acquaint him with the way to Horrordale Castle, and was not a little pleased

pleased to find the doctor acquainted with every step of the road.

"It's a journey I have not been for some years," cries the latter; "yet I recollect the whole of the ground.

"About twenty yeart back I had occasion to visit that part of the country, nay, the very spot, upon business of a very serious nature. It was at the earnest request of a gentleman of amiable character, in this place, who had received information that a relation of his, near Horrordale, had died suddenly, and there was a report that he had come by his death by means of violence; in short, he was represented by some, to have made away with himself.

"To ascertain the fact, medical men were called in to inspect the body; who refused to proceed to an examination, unless there was another of the faculty present,

present, who should be appointed by the nearest relation to the deceased.

" My friend intreated me in the most moving manner to accompany him for this purpose; and though it was of some inconvenience to me in my profession, I could not refuse his request.

" We travelled with the utmost dispatch, and soon after our arrival, commenced the examination.

" It was soon manifest to us that poison had been administered; but whether by the deceased, or others, we could not determine.

" The circumstance that led to a suspicion of the former was, the melancholy that was known to hang about the unfortunate man for some time.

This despondency made him likewise

averse

averse from society, and he was often heard to say, a little time would rid him of his misfortunes.

"So far we thought this unhappy gentleman in a fit of lunacy, aud under the pressure of misfortunes, might have done violence to himself.

"But there were instances produced on the opposite side of the question, which preponderated in his favour, and induced us to believe him innocent.

"We were now at a loss who to fix the accusation on, as the deceased was known to have little intercourse with society.

"There was a person, however, with whom he had been some time at variance, a certain lord of a castle, a few miles off, who was known to be of a very vindictive disposition, but we could find

find no instance to criminate him; and he was reported to have gone to the continent a month prior to the catastrophe.

"In this case of perplexity we could decide nothing, and were under the necessity of consigning the unhappy person to the grave, not altogether unaccompanied by the most dreadful of all opinions."

Orlando, during this discourse, felt an emotion, which he could hardly conceal. The lord of the castle, he concluded, meant Lord Horrordale, and that even the most distant relation should be supposed capable of so atrocious an act, excited in him the most unpleasant sensations.

The doctor and Orlando spent a few hours very agreeably with each other; and the latter thought it an irruption on his happiness when he rose to depart.

Mr. Selby now conducted Miss Monimia Pritchards to his house, and introducing her to his wife, assured our hero of her safe conduct to the vicarage, as he was himself going that way in the course of a day or two.

It was not without some regret Orlando relinquished his design of accompanying Monimia to her father's, but recollecting the excellent protection he should consign her to, and an impressive sense of the business he had set out upon rushing into his mind at the same time, he politely resigned the lady to the doctor's care.

Our hero did not forget to recommend the man of the cave to the doctor's notice, who appeared quite satisfied with what was mentioned in his behalf, and promised to procure him a creditable and comfortable employ.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE next morning Orlando found a chaise at the door, which he had directed Peter to procure for their journey; and after bidding the doctor adieu, and taking something like a tender farewell of Monimia, he proceeded, with the hopes of arriving at Horrordale, without further molestation.

They travelled a brisk pace in the course of the day, and in the evening, found themselves at Bridgenorth, where Orlando intended to pass the night.

Being disposed a little for society, he was not displeased when the landlord of the inn he stopped at, hinted to him he might join a party in an adjacent room, consisting of the most respectable men in the town, if agreeable to him. Orlando was glad of the offer, and was soon ushered by the landlord into this social meeting, where the attorney, the apothecary, and even the vicar, lent his assistancc to promote the conviviality of the evening.

Our hero soon obtained an amicable footing with them. His engaging address, and suavity of manners, were sure to gain him esteem in any society. It will not appear surprising, therefore, that after some little conversation, he was esteemed a valuable acquisition to the company.

The reverend gentleman who presided, poured out a bumper, in honour

of

of the stranger, which was seconded by the rest with every mark of enthusiasm.

Orlando, during his intercourse with the company, fell into conversation with one who was going the same road with himself; a treaty was soon agreed upon, and our hero was not a little pleased with the hopes of an agreeable conversation in the remaining part of his journey.

The next morning Orlando, with his companion, attended by Peter, set out upon their intended destination, the faithful domestic being allowed, by the most cordial consent of the stranger, as usual, a seat by the side of his master.

The two gentlemen entered into a very agreeable dialogue, which lasted to a considerable distance, when their attention was arrested by a circumstance which appeared not a little mysterious to

to them both, and harrassed our hero's 'squire with fresh alarms.

Two men rode up to the carriage, one on either side; and, after scrutinously surveying the company within, slackened their pace and left our travellers under a disagreeable suspence about their motive for so doing.

Poor old Peter put up an ejaculation, and exclaimed, "Oh! my dear master! a second mischief is befalling us; these people surely intend to rob and murder us!"

Orlando checked him for his imprudence in calling out, and intimated to him, that what he had seen was probably no more than the effect of mere idle curiosity.

"Ah! master," replied the intimidated 'squire, "curiosity is an expression that frightens me. "It

"It was curiosity that conducted us to that horrid cave!"

"Cease your importunities," cries Orlando, peevishly, "we can but deliver all, if they are the characters you suppose, and trust to Providence for the protection of our persons."

While this discourse lasted, the horsemen, several times passed and repassed the chaise---a circumstance which at length led our hero and his companions to suspect the honesty of their designs.

They at last were confirmed in their suspicions by observing, that the horsemen were armed with a brace of pistols each, which were clearly discovered, as the wind blew back the flaps of their great coats.

Their apprehensions, however, were

 not

not heightened to the same degree as Peter's, which operated so strongly on him, as to make him vent his fears aloud. They, on the other hand, were determined to part with their property with as good a grace as possible.

The strange men having now passed the chaise, kept at a certain distance before it, every now-and-then turning round to reconnoitre the travellers; a circumstance, however, soon happened which brought matters to a crisis.

It chanced, that the road they were about to enter was too narrow for two carriages to pass in an opposite direction.

They were, of course, obliged to stop for a large waggon, which was slowly advancing towards them.

The moment the horsemen saw this,

they

they rode up to the chaise, at the sight of which, poor Peter burst out in an agony of fear.

"For God's sake!---for pity's sake! ---spare my dear master!" To which Orlando paid no attention; but in a menacing tone, asked the strangers what they wanted.

The horsemen immediately replied, in a respecful manner, "Be not alarmed, gentlemen; our occupation is not to annoy any of his majesty's liege subjects; but to satisfy ourselves that the revenue is not injured.

Orlando now perceived that their visitors were not highwaymen, but a couple of inoffensive excisemen, whose custom it was, in this part of the country, to examine every conveyance they met.

 He

He therefore begged they would satisfy themselves as far as they pleased; upon which, the men respectfully bowing for the trouble they had occasioned, exclaimed, "all was right," and immediately rode away.

The features of Orlando's servant began now to wear a more cheerful aspect.

His master, by exercising a little good-natured raillery with him, had helped him to shake off that weakness which was sure to manifest itself on the most trifling sense of danger.

The two gentlemen were highly diverted with the whimsical blunder they had made, and amused themselves with the thoughts of it a considerable time afterwards.

Our hero and his companion had entertained

tertained each other with a great deal of agreeable conversation in the course of the day, when the latter at length found himself at his journey's end, and alighting, took a respectful farewell of the former, who now had not many miles to travel, and who directed the driver to use all dispatch in accomplishing the remaining part of the journey.

Orlando, after travelling a certain distance, began to have, every now-and-then, a view of Horrordale Castle; and the nearer he approached it, the more he found himself oppressed with a weight upon his spirits, which he could by no means account for.

The prospect around him was not at all adapted to relieve him of the burthen; it wore so dull and dreary an appearance, as was sure to produce a sadness in a mind like his. On one side of Horrordale Castle stood an immense

forest, whose dark and gloomy shade spread a horror on the whole country.

Time had so increased the growth of it, as to make it appear one solid impenetrable mass.

There was not the least appearance of cultivation about the spot, but wild plants and herbage grew in the greatest luxuriancy; upon which, the rough-coated solitary steed was seen to browse.

On the other side was an extensive tract of country, which, for many miles, appeared unoccupied and forlorn.

The approach to the castle was almost inaccessible, in consequence of deep ruts and broken ground; so that our hero and his man alighted, in regard to their personal safety, and having dismissed the chaise, proceeded on foot.

The

The castle was surrounded by a moat of stagnated water, choaked up with weeds and rushes; and, by its foul and putrid state, seemed to have been long the abode of the most noxious reptiles.

Our hero crossed the draw-bridge, at the extremity of which was a massy iron door, defended by a huge and formidable portcullis, which seemed to hang in dreadful suspense over the heads of those who passed.

Orlando gave a loud knock, which was answered by the barking of a large mastiff dog, whose growls and raving at intervals, denoted his savage and ferocious inclination.

After repeated knocks at the gate, he was, at length, accosted by an infirm old man; who, with a vacant countenance, and unmeaning stare, enquired of

of him, through the grating, what he wanted.

"My name is Bellgrove," replied Orlando. The porter made no reply, but stood looking at him with a gaze of curiosity and astonishment: grown incensed with delay, he now exclaimed, in a loud tone,

"I come from Bellgrove, to take possession of this estate."

The man now started, as if just awoke from a dream, and opening the door, made many apologies for the delay.

Our hero entered, and the ponderous iron door was closed, with a noise, that echoed like thunder in the courtyard.

It was not long before Orlando understood the cause of the porter's unaccount-

accountable behaviour; for after a little discourse with him, he found the attendant so deaf, as scarcely to understand one word he directed towards him.

Orlando, and his servant Peter, were now ushured into the great hall of the castle, and the former requested that he might see the valet or steward.

The porter retired, and soon introduced an ill-favoured looking man; who, notwithstanding his obsequious exertions to please, could not conceal a brutality of countenance, extremely disgusting to our hero, who enquired if he had been long in the capacity of steward to the late Lord Horrordale, and received for answer, that the real steward not knowing how to account for the delay which had happened, since a letter had been dispatched to Bellgrove, had given up all expectations of the

the visit requested; and was, he believed, now on his way to enquire into the cause of it.

Our hero, not being disposed to enter into a long communication with this individual, desired he might be conducted to a sitting-room, and was soon ushured into one, that seemed to be the interior part of the castle.

He then requested some refreshment, which was soon procured him; and while he partook of it, he desired that his servant might be attended to in the great hall.

Orlando was chagrined at the misunderstanding that had taken place; for as he had no inclination to confer with the man who had just left him, he found himself denied of the only opportunity of making himself acquainted with the affairs of the castle.

He

He therefore debated within himself, whether he should wait till the return of the steward, or go back to Bellgrove Castle. The dreariness of the abode, and many reflexions of a disagreeable nature, respecting the place he had arrived at, determined him, without much deliberation, to pursue the latter course the following day.

In the mean time, the sensations of our hero's squire were not of the most agreeable kind.

He pondered seriously on the woful contrast of his present situation, to that which he had left.

While Peter was casting the balance, very much to his disadvantage, the old porter cried, "you seem dull, master; come, fall to our fare, it may revive you a little."

"I am

" I am a little out of heart, indeed," replies the former. " In the first place, I am not used to long journies; and then, people at my time of life are never so happy as when at their own fire-side."

" I am sorry," cries the porter, " that our place appears so lonely to you; and am afraid we have little more to entertain you with while you stay, than what you see. Very few people stay long with us.

" Indeed!" cries Peter, hastily, " what can be the reason of their dislike?"

" I don't know," replies the other, " unless it be the dulness of the place, or the noises and apparitions, which some foolish, timid people, have fancied to disturb the castle at times. For my part, I never heard any sounds, but what

what I thought proceeded from the wind, or some other common cause; and as to appearances, I have, to be sure, seen what has startled me at first; but my sight has long been ailing, and that, I believe, has been the cause as much as any thing."

Notwithstanding the indifference manifested by the old man at the close of his speech, there was enough said to excite very uneasy sensations in the mind of our timid 'squire, whose fancy was wound up to the extreme at the mention of any thing like the visitations of ghosts or apparitions, and he groaned under the idea of having exchanged a home of comfort, for the regions of misery and misfortune.

He was by no means solaced by the description he had heard, and the woful contrast the apartment he was in bore, to the cheerful rooms of Bellgrove Castle,

tle, became another incentive to uneasiness.

He found himself in a lonely spot, where every thing wore the aspect of gloom and melancholy.

The high and heavy arched windows, through which a dim obscure light entered, served to cast a forlorn shade into the apartment.

The height of the cieling, from which hung suspended, the mouldering banners of faded grandeur; the dark and hollow recesses in many parts; the rusty implements of war, ranged in an irregular fashion; the hootings of the bird of night; and the incessant flitting of bats against the casement, with the savage ravings, and hideous howlings of the mastiff in the court-yard,

All contributed to form a woful contrast

trast to the delights of Bellgrove Castle; and poor old Peter felt uneasy forebodings that he should experience fresh terrors, before he beheld that blest abode again.

The porter perceiving the dejection which had seized him, began to be a little jocular, exclaiming,

"Don't be alarmed, my good friend, notwithstanding reports. Here is nothing to harm you, believe me.

"Besides, if you are really under any apprehensions about what I have mentioned, you may pass the night with us, and we will protect you."

Peter felt much revived with the proposal; and the assistance he received from some strong ale, which his host had provided for him, in some measure roused him from his dejection.

The

The conversation now took a more lively turn; at length, Peter recollecting his master might stand in need of his attendance, rose, with a view of going to him; but the deaf man's companion insisted on it that he should continue to rest from his fatigue, under the promise that he would undertake the office himself.

It was a long time before the faithful 'squire would give the matter up; at last intreaties prevailed, and the steward's deputy proceeded to wait on Orlando.

The old porter now took hold of the jug, and was just upon the point of drinking the health of our 'squire, when he exclaimed suddenly, "Gad zooken! some of us, I see, know how to find the bottom of things;" and rose, with an intention of fetching a reinforcement of their beverage.

Our

Our 'squire now, for certain reasons, rose to accompany, or to assist, as he called it, his companion; but the other would, by no means, admit of his stirring about after the fatigue he had endured.

Peter was, in consequence, left alone; and to prevent his imagination from being too busy at this juncture, he began to exert himself, by walking to and fro in the hall; and his impatience for the return of his companion increased, even to a state of agony.

Scarcely had he traversed the apartment a third time, when he thought a sudden dimness seized the light, and turning round to discover the cause, he beheld a tall figure, with a grim and ghastly countenance, clad in complete black armour, who, in an instant, extinguished the candle.

In

In a moment, a confused horrid sound took place; screams, groans, and howlings, assailed his ears, with a noise, like the rattling of chains; and a report, as if various instruments were clashing together. The apartment shook to the centre, and the dreadful combat of sounds increased to such a degree, as though the whole building was instantaneously tumbling into one mass of ruins.

Enveloped in darkness, and stupified with horror, our unfortunate 'squire, at length, fell prostrate on the floor; and the porter coming up from the cellar, at the same instant, fell over him as he lay, and spilled the whole contents of the can on the visage of the affrighted traveller.

The man now rose with the utmost astonishment at the situation of Peter.

He

He was puzzled to guess what could have brought him there, and in that condition; and stood over him, with the hopes of seeing him recover.

In a little time the coolness of the operation began to shew its beneficial effects in the features of our unfortunate 'squire; after sneezing violently for a few minutes he arose, and assisted by the porter, sat himself down in a chair. Soon as he recovered his speech, he entreated for Christ's sake, to be removed from the place, which, he believed, was the resort of a whole legion of devils.

His companion looked with no small degree of surprise at him, when he made this declaration; and knew not whether to impute the oddness of it to the potency of the ale, or the force of his own apprehensions.

 He,

He, however, administered all the consolation in his power; but could scarce refrain from a smile, on asking him if he would like a little more ale.

While they were in discourse together, the deputy steward arrived from attending on Orlando, and began consulting the porter on the best mode of entertaining their noble visitor for the night; at last, it was agreed upon, that our hero should be conducted to a room on the west wing of the castle, as being the most commodious, and commanding an extensive prospect; and what was singular good luck for Peter, it contained a closet with a bed, which would accommodate him near at hand with his master.

Orlando now rang the bell for the attendance of his old servant for the remainder of the evening.

It

It was no considerable while, however, before they repaired to the chamber allotted them; and while Peter was arranging matters in the room, our hero amused himself with surveying the different articles it contained.

Though every thing was now arranged for our hero's repose, he could not prevail on himself to retire to bed; a weight of uneasiness still hung over him, a sort of presentiment of he knew not what. These uncomfortable sensations bade defiance to rest, and Orlando resolved to continue up, if he could find any thing to amuse himself with.

He took a book from a small collection ranged on a few mouldy and worm-eaten shelves, so covered with dust, as plainly shewed they had lain a long time in disorder and neglect.

The place he opened at, presented

him with a passage, which struck him with very remarkable effect:

———————" Now o'er the one half world
" Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
" The curtain'd sleep; now witchcraft celebrates
" Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd Murder
" Alarum'd by his centinel, the wolf,
" Whose howls his watch, thus with his stealthy
" pace
" With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his
" design
" Moves like a ghost. SHAKESPEARE.

Orlando felt a kind of prophetic dread upon reading these lines, though he knew not why they should be inauspicious to his own safety.

He, however, put up the book, as not adapted to his relief, and had recourse to a flute which stood in a corner of the room. Our hero found some difficulty in making it speak, but at length produced a note.

After

After exercising himself with a few strains, he was struck with surprise at a certain echo, which at periods repeated the tones he delivered.

His curiosity led him now to try several experiments this way, in all which the air was returned so naturally, as led him almost to believe, that there was some person near in the act of imitating his music.

Orlando, at this juncture, threw himself into a chair, and began to meditate on the singularity of this circumstance: scarce was he seated, when a rumbling noise ensued just under him, and by a sudden movement of the floor, he found himself irresistably descend into some unknown region below.

CHAPTER IX.

THE momentary surprise which took possession of Orlando, made him shout for assistance, but in vain; the trap-door closed instantaneously, and he gradually sunk into an abode of utter darkness.

A temporary swoon seized him on this very extraordinary occasion, and he lay some minutes insensible to the horrors of his situation.

When he recovered, his apprehensions and suspence were dreadful.

All

All was dark about him, and he knew not but those who had concerted the snare, might instantly be at his heels to murder him.

The passage which he had read came forcibly into his mind, and he now concluded, that it was a presage of the mischiefs about to befall him.

Our hero, however, did not sit himself down in despair, but with an intrepidity natural to him; determined to explore some means of release, or to brave the worst that might happen to him.

He began groping about, hoping to be favoured by a ray of light, to assist him in his researches.

In the midst of his labours he grasped an object, which made him instantaneously recoil. His resolution, how-

ever, quickly returned; in a moment he regained the spot, and attempting to recover the object which had startled him, to his infinite terror and consternation, he placed his hands on the icy features of a corpse.

Struck with horror at this circumstance, he concluded he had arrived at a spot, where many a fatal victim of cruelty had breathed his last; and which was intended, shortly to be his grave.

Stung with these reflexions, he ranged with a wild and disordered step wherever his feet would carry him.

As he was darting from one spot to another his foot tripped, and stooping to feel what it was that obstructed his passage, encountered additional horror, by grasping a human skull.

In a momentary phrensy he threw it from him. A des-

A desperate thought now seized his brain.

" This is no other," exclaims he, " than the murderer's charnel-house, and these the bones that have been sacrificed to his remorseless purpose.

" By Heavens! these fragments of mortality shall render ten-fold vengeance on their destroyers."

So saying, he stooped and grasped a huge thigh-bone, and brandishing this awful relic, directed it with maddened rage at he knew not what. It fell on something, like a door, which reverberated the sound like thunder.

Orlando rushed with vehemence on the door, and after repeated attacks, it gave way, and admitted him into a dreary place, in the centre of which

 hung

hung a lamp that cast a pale glimmering around.

Dismal as this apartment appeared, he rushed into it with joy.

The return of light was gratifying to his soul, though surrounded with melancholy and disgusting objects.

This gloomy place contained several cavities. Orlando stepped forward to survey one nearly opposite to him, but started back on beholding a human skeleton, half reclining towards the floor: round the ancle-bones appeared a ring of massy iron; it was mouldering into pieces, and its haggard front seemed dropping from its gristly trunk.

Orlando turned aside with terror from the sight, and looked round with wistful eyes for an opening to escape.

While he was so doing, the sound of footsteps quickly advancing towards the place he stood in, made him fly for concealment into one of the recesses.

Scarce had he hid himself behind a pile of mouldering coffins, when two furious ruffians entered, bearing a human body on their shoulders; and carrying it to nearly opposite where Orlando was concealed, flung it into something like a tomb, exclaiming, "Execrable villain! lie there acccursed; soon shall thy master know a fate as bad!"

Panic struck, as was our hero, at these expressions levelled against his own life, he nevertheless was determined, soon as the murderers retired, to take a last view of his faithful servant.

Orlando crossed to the tomb, and beheld him with inexpressive concern

extended, insensible, and without signs of life.

Despair seized him at this sight; with uplifted hands he ranged to and fro, and at length advanced to take a parting look on his unfortunate domestic, when, to his infinite surprise and joy he found him breathe.

Our 'squire, in a little time, recovered so far as to open his eyes, and make an effort to get up.

At first he gazed wildly about him, but in a few minutes recognized his beloved master standing by him.

"Ah! my dear master," cried he, with a deep sigh.

Here his voice failed him, and he relapsed into a momentary state of insensibility.

Orlando

Orlando seeing his servant overcome with surprise, waited for the moment of his recovery, and then exhorted him in the mildest terms to forbear parleying in so dreadful a case, and to use every effort for immediate flight.

The lapse of every moment increased our hero's suspense.

Woful experience taught him not a moment was to be lost; with an ardency of mind he caught up poor old Peter, and flew to the door the ruffians went out at, but found it fast.

With haste and impatience he then surveyed all the avenues in the apartment, but discovered nothing favourable to his wishes.

"Some Heavenly power direct me to escape," cries Orlando.

In

In uttering this he stamped violently on the floor, and found it rebounded; when searching narrowly, they discovered the secret spring of a trap-door, which immediately opened, leaving a space, just wide enough for a single person to descend, through which they hastily retreated, taking the precaution immediately to close the door.

Scarce was this accomplished, when a violent commotion ensued above them; and Orlando, by listening, heard several menaces and curses, which he concluded, to arise from the circumstance of their escape.

Our hero and his 'squire now found themselves in total darkness, and began exploring the place to find an opening; at last they felt something like a bricked archway, with a space sufficient to admit a person on all-fours.

Made

Made desperate with fear, they boldly set about traversing this passage; and after infinite pain and inconvenience, arrived at last into a gloomy apartment, with an iron grating, through which issued a light, just sufficient to direct them to a narrow avenue, leading into a spacious wine cellar.

In the midst of their perturbation and alarm, Orlando thought this a happy opportunity to refresh themselves; and regardless for a moment of his own feelings, instantly presented a bottle to his servant, who was nearly exhausted with terror and dismay.

The old man took a copious draught, and found himself much revived; and our hero benefited not a little by making the same application.

They now re-commenced their endeavours to discover a way to escape, and

and soon found in one corner of the room a heavy door, concealed by a thick buttress.

Orlando found a key near the spot, which he supposed, would open it, but he was disappointed; nor could all the efforts he used make any alteration in its position; a circumstance which chagrined him much, as this was the only visible means to help them on in their pursuit.

Baffled in his hopes, he ruminated on some mode of concealment, not knowing how soon they might be surprised with a visit from the ruffians.

Our hero, by an effort of main strength, divided some of the largest hampers ranged in the darkest part of the apartment, into which space, he and Peter rushed with the greatest precipitation.

They

They had not been long in this uneasy situation, when the sound of footsteps, descending towards the door way, excited in them fresh tumults of alarm; soon after a key was applied, the door opened, and they could distinctly hear a person enter the vault.

Orlando reared himself up in the most cautious manner to get a sight of the visitor, and in this attitude he saw, making his way into the vault, a figure of the most terrifying description.

His visage was partly concealed, by a helmet cap which he wore close over his forehead; but enough of his countenance was seen, to denote it murderous and horrid.

On one side hung a naked dagger, and on the other, was girt a brace of pistols; in his hand he held a small lamp,

lamp, which gave a faint and glimmering light.

Luckily for our persecuted sufferers he kept at a distance from the place they had resorted to.

The ruffian now pulled open a little closet door, which had escaped Orlando's notice, and took from thence something that appeared like a round hollow box. He then sat himself down on a stone bench which projected from the wall, and pouring some liquor into the article he had just taken, drank it off with the greatest avidity.

Orlando thought the cup had something of a strange appearance, and his curiosity led him to notice it with strict attention, when horrible to relate, he discovered it to be a human skull, hollowed out for the purpose.

He

He could scarcely govern his feelings at so inhuman a sight, but judged it prudent to stifle his indignation for the moment, particularly, as he entertained hopes that an opportunity would occur, before long, from which they might obtain a desirable advantage.

Orlando was not disappointed in his expectations.

In a little time the monster had made such repeated applications to the bottle, that he began to nod, and shortly afterwards, fell down in a state of brutal insensibility.

Our hero, without further delay, broke from his confinement, and ordering Peter to follow, they both rushed forward to secure the ruffian.

Having disarmed him of his dagger and pistols, they issued from the vault, and

and turned the key upon the murderer.

Being provided with weapons of defence, Orlando was determined to make a bold effort to escape from the castle.

Having quitted the vault, they perceived, by the light of the lamp they carried with them, a flight of stone steps.

Orlando now cautioned Peter to be instantly on his guard, and giving him the dagger, the poor old man took it, exclaiming, "God keep us from using it, my dear master!" trembling, at the same time, with an agitation, that excited the greatest compassion in the mind of his master.

When they had ascended the staircase, they came into a little hall of a circular form, having five different avenues leading into it. Orlando

Orlando deliberated which to pass, at length he directed his way through one that seemed rather loftier than the rest, when after passing several windings and turnings, they arrived at a large stately room.

He now supposed that they had emerged from the subterraneous part, and come to the interior situation of the castle, which made them feel more lively hopes of escaping from their horrid confinement.

They were, however, still on the alarm, not knowing but that they might, the next moment, be surprised, and murdered.

Our hero crossed the apartment, and went out at a small door, which brought them into a long passage, which he and his 'squire were just on the point of entering, but suddenly started back at the

the appearance of a light, which issued through the chinks of an adjoining apartment.

They now found that they had arrived at the habitable part of the castle, and doubted not but it was occupied by the ruffians.

Our hero drew near to where he supposed the light to proceed from, and luckily found a space between the wainscot, sufficient to observe their conduct.

Round a table sat four desperate looking figures, and a chair was vacant for a fifth.

In a little time a ruffian entered, holding a dagger reeking with blood, who, with a savage sneer, exclaimed,

" Cursed be the fawning hypocrite!

" What,

"What, shall a miscreant, who has sanctioned our deeds, and shared the spoils for years, now talk of pity?—But I have sent him to his account.

"Thus perish," continued the murderer, striking his dagger into the tapestry, "all apostates from our cause."

Our hero ardently wished to have a sight of the wounded man, thinking, if he possessed any life at all, he might get some intelligence from the victim, of the right mode of getting out of the castle.

With the utmost caution he traversed one or two rooms, and came at last to a landing-place, where they found the assassinated man, weltering in his blood.

The unhappy wretch, soon as he beheld Orlando, in faultering accents, exclaimed, "my fate is just. "Oh!

"Oh! Sir, dreadful doings have been perpetrated here.

"But fly, they seek your blood; life is ebbing fast. Take the avenue on the left-hand as you descend—farewell."

Orlando and his servant hearing footsteps, hastened away with the utmost precipitation.

They took the course the dying man directed them, and pursuing several windings, came at last to a small place, with an iron grating, about the size of a window, but a small distance from the ground. Our hero exulted in the sight, and pushing aside the grating, he and his faithful old servant descended immediately from the horrors of the castle.

CHAP.

CHAPTER X.

ORLANDO and his companion uttered an ejaculation of gratitude soon as they found themselves at liberty; and setting off with full speed, directed their way over a heath, which lay about that part of the castle, from which they had escaped.

This heath was skirted with an immense forest, which served to conceal our fugitives when they arrived.

Soon as they found themselves in the wood, Orlando took a bottle out of his

pocket, which he had contrived to secure when in the castle; with this they refreshed themselves, and then deliberated on the track they should take in their retreat.

They determined at length upon the path which led by the edge of the forest, intending to alight at the first house or cottage they came near.

They continued to travel the greater part of the day without observing a single individual; at length, at a small distance on their left-hand, they discovered a man, in the employment of cutting wood.

Our hero enquired of this person the way to some habitation, who directed them to a cottage, about a mile off, standing on the borders of a small verdant-looking common.

Farmer

Farmer Myrtle's abode, at which our travellers soon arrived, was the seat of health and content.

Its situation, indeed, was such as accounted well for the ruddy complexion of his numerous offspring; and the easy and cheerful countenances of the farmer and his wife, clearly evinced that happiness may exist in a very small circle.

They felt no alarm at the appearance of a stranger; so that Orlando soon saw he had arrived at a spot where he might, in confidence, enjoy serenity and repose.

Mrs. Myrtle had just come from milking a cow, and the farmer was returned with a lot of fish, which he had caught in a neighbouring brook.

Mrs. Myrtle had a kind of two-fold occupation on her hands; the care of

her family, and attendance on a little shop, with which she supplied the neighbouring cottages with several useful articles.

The house stood on a rising ground, the entrance to which was by three steps.

The front was ornamented with a vine, which spread its branches from side to side.

The hall or kitchen was roomy, and decorated with several utensils for agriculture.

In the centre, on a beam, were ranged two or three fowling-pieces; having, close by, a net and several fishing rods.

The rack was supplied with the flitch in store, and here and there hung suspended a few hams, intended for the hour of festival and merriment.

Mrs. Myrtle was a pattern for domestic duties; extremely neat in her person; affable in her manners; active and alert in business. She was a valuable woman, one who centered the whole of her happiness, in studying the wishes of her husband, and the just and proper concerns of her family.

Our hero apologized for intruding on the hospitality of the farmer; asserting, that himself and servant had suffered a great deal of fatigue, and begged the favour of resting a short time at his house; to which, Myrtle replied, in the most hospitable and friendly manner, and gave Orlando the strongest assurances of his good wishes to entertain him with every thing his house afforded.

Mrs. Myrtle, at the same time, stepped out, and returned with a capacious bowl of milk, warm from the cow, which

which she, with the greatest good nature, handed to Orlando; and having spread a cloth on the table, white as the driven snow, prepared a feast of home-made bread, ham, new-laid eggs, and other viands, then in the house.

Our hero applied to the bowl, and after taking a copious draught, protested it was the most delicious beverage he had ever tasted.

The farmer then invited him to the table, to which Orlando approached; but intreated, at the same time, that Mr. and Mrs. Myrtle would also sit down to it.

The farmer and his wife seemed rather shy of acquiescing at first, but the engaging address of our hero prevailed, and they soon assembled as a very happy party.

After

After resting an hour or two, Orlando entertained ideas of proceeding homewards; but the feeble state of his servant, who now began to suffer seriously from his fatigue, and his own lassitude and weariness of body, embarrassed him not a little in his reflexions. While he was pondering seriously on the affair, Myrtle was using every assiduity to entertain his guests; and at length observing the heavy looks of our travellers, intreated them, in the most friendly manner, to defer their journey till the next day, observing, he could provide accommodation for them with no inconvenience.

Orlando, in his present situation, was glad of the farmer's offer, and thanking him in the most respectful manner, said, he would avail himself of so friendly a proposal.

Our hero amused himself in the

course of the evening with a walk in the orchard, which made a very rural appearance at the back of the house.

At the further end, under the shade of a venerable oak, was placed a seat, admirably adapted for contemplation and retirement, into which he threw himself, and immediately a train of ideas, melancholy and irksome, took possession of him.

He ruminated on past occurrences, till he almost persuaded himself, that an inevitable destiny of misfortunes was to accompany him all his life; in short, he was gradually sinking into despondency, when summoning up the fortitude and heroism intuitive in him, he shook off the burthen, and began to amuse himself with thoughts of a tender kind.

The lovely image of Monimia now stole like a charm upon his soul.

"Delightful moments," exclaims our hero, "when cheered by thy heavenly conversation.

"What pleasure in thy smile; what good sense in thy sentiments.

"How fascinating thy looks; and how infatuating thy conversation.

"Seated by thee, my adorable Monimia, in a serene evening like the present, and surrounded by the most delicious views—how extatic were my bliss, while attending to thy soft persuasive tongue, and listening to the notes of the melodious nightingale.

"Could I but hope to have inspired thee with congenial sentiments, in this happy spot, how smoothly would the tide of life flow. Content, serene, and blest beyond description, we would

 spend

spend whole years together, in rural innocence and happiness."

Orlando could have feasted his ideas for hours with such a reverie, but he found it expedient now to retire.

His health required rest, and Mr. Myrtle had just come to acquaint him that supper was on the table, and that there was only wanting his presence, to encourage them to partake of it.

Our hero, delighted with his unaffected hospitality, accompanied him, with a tranquillity, which he had seldom known; and which was heightened to a considerable degree, when he sat down and beheld the farmer and his wife, surrounded by a numerous cheerful offspring, whose innocent prattle occasioned them uninterrupted amusement; and to which, they attended

with

with an air of happiness, not to be described.

Orlando was quite of a domestic taste, and not even the most splendid banquet that was ever exhibited, could have delighted him so much as a sight like this.

The next morning our hero resumed his ideas about returning home, but his old servant was not sufficiently recovered for the purpose; and he, himself, experienced a lassitude of body, not well adapted for such a design. In consequence of a pressing invitation from Myrtle, to tarry one day longer, he again put off his journey to Bellgrove Castle; determined, at all events, to undertake it the following morning.

In the course of the day, as Peter and his master were taking a little excursion from the cottage, a conversation

 ensued,

ensued, on their respective situations in the castle.

This was the first time a word had passed on the subject, since their escape; the truth is, that when quitting that detested spot, their attention was so taken up with regard to their own personal safety, that scarce any thing but broken unconnected sentences had passed between them; and those, no way relating to the subject.

Such, indeed, was the reserve which the horrors of the castle had produced on Orlando, that he had not as yet felt an inclination to make them the topic of conversation; and poor old Peter was so confounded with terror, that the bare mention of the circumstance, at first, would have operated like a stroke of electricity upon him. Now, however, that he appeared, in a great measure, recovered, Orlando thought he

might

might touch on the affair, without agitating his feelings.

They were now taking a turn across a field, in view of the cottage, when our hero exclaimed, "Well, my old friend, I suppose, by this time, you are quite tired of serving one, who has led you into so many difficulties?"

"Why, I must acknowledge, my dear master," cries Peter, "that mine is not a time of life to bear many rubs or buffetings; but I shall never repine at any thing that may happen in your service."

"Well said, my noble friend; and base indeed would be my heart, could I treat with ingratitude so faithful an attachment. But courage, I hope we shall participate in many happy engagements to come, Peter.

"Sorry, indeed, should I be, to expose

pose your venerable age to miseries like the past."

"Ah, master!" cries Peter, "I am sometimes afraid you distrust my attachment: my weakness, it is true, may give rise to the opinion; but I have, a long time, made up my mind to live and die with you."

Here a tear of affection fell from him, which Orlando considering as the strongest testimony of his fidelity, assured him, he had the highest respect for his services; which were such as were sure to excite his esteem upon every recollection of them.

Our hero now questioned Peter, as to his sufferings, after their separation; when the latter began, as follows:

'Your honour recollects sending me into the closet adjoining the room you were

were to sleep in, and I was consoling myself with the hopes of obtaining a little rest, after our fatigueing journey.

'Just as I was on the point of coming to await your honour's commands for the evening, a sudden noise in your apartment made me fly to know the cause, and I entered just time enough to behold the treachery practised upon you. I sprang forward, with the hopes of rescuing you, but my attempts were ineffectual, the trap-door closed, and left me stupified with amazement at the sight.

'I called aloud for assistance, not recollecting we were in the hands of ruffians; no assistance was offered, and I immediately ran out of the apartment, with an intent to escape.

'In traversing a gallery, not far from the room, I was met by a man in black

armour,

armour, who opposed my passage, at the same time exclaiming,

'Advance no further, villain! This moment is your last, if you proceed another step!

'I fell upon my knees, and intreated, in the most suppliant manner, that he would spare the life of my poor master.

'This speech, instead of exciting compassion in the ruffian, inspired him with fresh sentiments of cruelty.--- Your master, cries he, has paid the price of his presumption, in laying claim to this castle; and shortly, you shall be consigned to a like fate: so saying, he seized me by the collar, and dragged me through various places, till we arrived at where the crew were carousing.

'Marco, cries he to a fellow, hideous as Satan himself,

'Bind

'Bind this villain hand and foot, and chain him to the wall next the gristly spectacle below. There let him await, in torturing suspense, the moment of my revenge!

'I was immediately assailed by three or four of the ruffians, who were about to put the mandate into execution, when revenge strengthened my enfeebled sinews, and rushing forward, I caught hold of a dagger that lay near, and aimed a furious blow at the man in armour; but, alas! the blow was counteracted, and the murderers instantly fell upon me with exasperated rage and fury.

'I soon became insensible; and the first moment of my recovery was, when I beheld your honour standing by me in the vault.'

"Such a set of miscreants must not be

be permitted to persist in their abominations," cries Orlando; "and, but for certain prudential reasons, I would immediately solicit assistance, and surprise the castle, not that I think we should be successful in apprehending the villains; apprized of our departure, they have, no doubt, made a precipitate escape.

"I must, however, at some period, endeavour to develope the mysteries of that place; it has most certainly been the abode of cruelty and injustice, but who have been the instigators of such inhumanity, I am at a loss to determine."

Orlando was proceeding on the subject, when he suddenly recollected they had walked a greater distance than he was aware of, and looking round, with a view of returning, was earnestly intreated by Peter to go as far as a pleasant hill, a little before them, which seemed to command a delightful prospect.

The day was auspicious to their design, and when they arrived at the summit, Orlando and his 'squire were gratified with the richest view they had ever beheld.

On one side ran a silver stream, the banks of which were ornamented with cowslips and daises, of a beautiful hue.

In the meadows beyond, various cattle were grazing, and the tinkling of the sheep bell, added music to the scene.

On the borders of the stream stood the busy angler; who, every now-and-then, threw up some addition to his day's sport.

The prospect was not very extensive, but it was charming. The eye could not be carried either way, more than a few miles; but the whole exhibited such a mul-

a multiplicity of objects, as could not fail to charm the fancy.

Our hero did, by no means, regret attending to his servants' request; he descended the hill in raptures, and thought himself amply repaid for his exertions.

Soon as they returned to a little common, almost at the foot of the hill, their attention was taken, in observing a small circle of people, surrounding some object, which seemed, very particularly, to engage their notice.

Orlando, though not tinctured with that weakness of running up to know the cause of every little trifling bustle, was yet curious to find out what had produced this assembly; and an idea that it might be a case of distress, made him hasten to the spot.

Upon

Upon coming to the crowd, he perceived in the midst of it a little boy, who was crying and sobbing piteously.

The little fellow held his hand up to his face, and seemed so overcome with sorrow, as not to be able to make any reply to the questions directed to him.

Orlando, upon a closer examination, was much surprised to find it was little Johnny, one of farmer Myrtle's sons, who had become so partial to him, as to have followed him almost all the way to the hill; but not being able to overtake our hero, had given up the pursuit, and abandoned himself to despair.

The little fellow, however, soon espied his favourite, and ran to him, with such an excess of joy, as clearly shewed his great partiality for Orlando.

Our hero had, indeed, won him over

by

by several little presents, and by amusing him with many entertaining stories, so that Johnny was never more happy, than when in the strange gentleman's company.

Our hero was highly entertained with this tribute of infant gratitude; and taking him up in his arms, comforted him, with the assurance of soon being at home again. The little fellow was now quite happy, and amused his companion with a great deal of innocent prattle; which, with a sense of the child's regard for him, made the time pass very agreeably, till they at length arrived at the cottage.

CHAPTER XI.

ORLANDO and his man left the cottage early next morning. The kind farmer shewing a disposition to oblige our travellers to the last.

Finding his amiable guest resolved on going, he contrived to get ready a pair of horses for their use; an offer which our hero accepted, on condition of not using them further than the first market town.

It was not without regret Orlando left his happy and benevolent hosts, and cordially

cordially shaking hands with the farmer, gave him an earnest invitation to Bellgrove Castle.

His little affectionate friend looked with an innocent gaze at him at his departure, and was just beginning to shew some sorrowful symptoms on the occasion, when Orlando taking out his watch, put it into his hands, and desired him to give it to his father, to preserve as a keep-sake for him.

The clock had just struck six when our hero departed from the cottage.

The morning was beautiful.

The sun had risen about an hour, and shed an enlivening lustre all around.

The birds had begun their early song.

The industrious peasants were hieing to

to their daily labours, and the ruddy milk-maid was hastily returning with her spoil.

While the busy shepherd was tending his flock—

"Rous'd by the cock, the soon clad shepherd
"leaves
"His mossy cottage, where with peace he dwells,
"And from the crowded fold, in order drives
"His flock, to taste the verdure of the morn."

THOMSON.

The scene was highly exhilarating, and quite in unison with Orlando's feelings; who, having recovered from the gloom he had contracted at the castle, felt much elevated in the prospect of seeing his friends again.

They were not long before they arrived at Tewksbury, when quitting their horses, Orlando ordered a chaise

to be got ready in the course of half an hour.

In the mean time he enquired for a trusty man, to whom he committed the horses, and making him a handsome present, directed him to conduct them carefully to farmer Myrtle's.

Having refreshed himself, he gave orders to the chaise-driver to use dispatch.

After travelling post all the day, they found they had accomplished something more than half the journey; and in the evening, alighted at Betley.

Orlando, in a little time after, with a view of amusing himself with the papers, repaired to the coffee-room, and soon placed himself by the side of a gentleman, who had the appearance of a clergyman;

gyman; and who, with the greatest politeness and good nature, rose to accommodate our hero in his seat.

There was something affable and benign in the countenance of this gentleman, that very soon ingratiated itself into Orlando's favour.

It happened that the stranger had equally the same propensity for the company of our hero; a conversation soon took place between them, highly amusing to both parties. The doctor was divested of that pomp and arrogance, so notorious in many clerical characters.

Though educated at one of the colleges, his mind was not contaminated with a certain disgusting fastidiousness, not unfrequently brought from such institutions.

 He

He was no pedant; on the other hand, though his language was correct, and even elegant, it was easy, unstudied, and unaffected.

In fine, he exhibited great suavity of manners, was easy of access, and could entertain his company in a vein of pleasantry, without prophaneness.

The doctor and our hero had, at length, got on so social a footing, that they reciprocally enquired into the destination of each other; and on the former describing his home at Ashgrove Vicarage,

"Good Heavens!" cries our hero; "that is the name of the residence of the lady, whom I delivered from the cave."

"And do I see before me that gallant youth?" exclaims the doctor.

The

The most friendly congratulation immediately ensued on both sides; and a contract was instantaneously agreed on, that they should travel the remaining part of the journey together.

Our hero and his friend were so entertained with each other's company, that they unintentionally sat up till a late hour; at length, the doctor casting his eyes towards the clock, reminded our hero of the rest necessary for the prosecution of their journey, and they both retired to their respective apartments, mutually delighted with the evenings adventure.

In the morning the two friends departed, not a little pleased at the prospect of their future intercourse and acquaintance.

As they proceeded on the road, they amused themselves with observations on

various objects, and were particularly attentive to the many fine prospects, which every now-and-then appeared.

The doctor, at length, in a certain part of the road, desired our hero to notice a stately mansion, seated on an eminence, at some distance, and which commanded a bold open view of the country around.

"That house, sir," cries the doctor, "has not long since become the scene of woe and wretchedness; and the lord of it now secretes himself in some recluse apartment, insensible to all the enjoyments of life, and totally disgusted with society."

"The story seems interesting, though melancholy," observed our hero; and requested the favour of a recital of it.

"I shall not hesitate a moment to

comply

comply with your request," replies the doctor; "particularly, as I have observed in you a disposition to sympathize with misfortune; an inclination which, believe me, sir, without flattery, I have ever considered as connected with good sense, and true benevolence of heart."

Orlando bowed at the compliment, and the doctor proceeded, as we shall find in the second volume.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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